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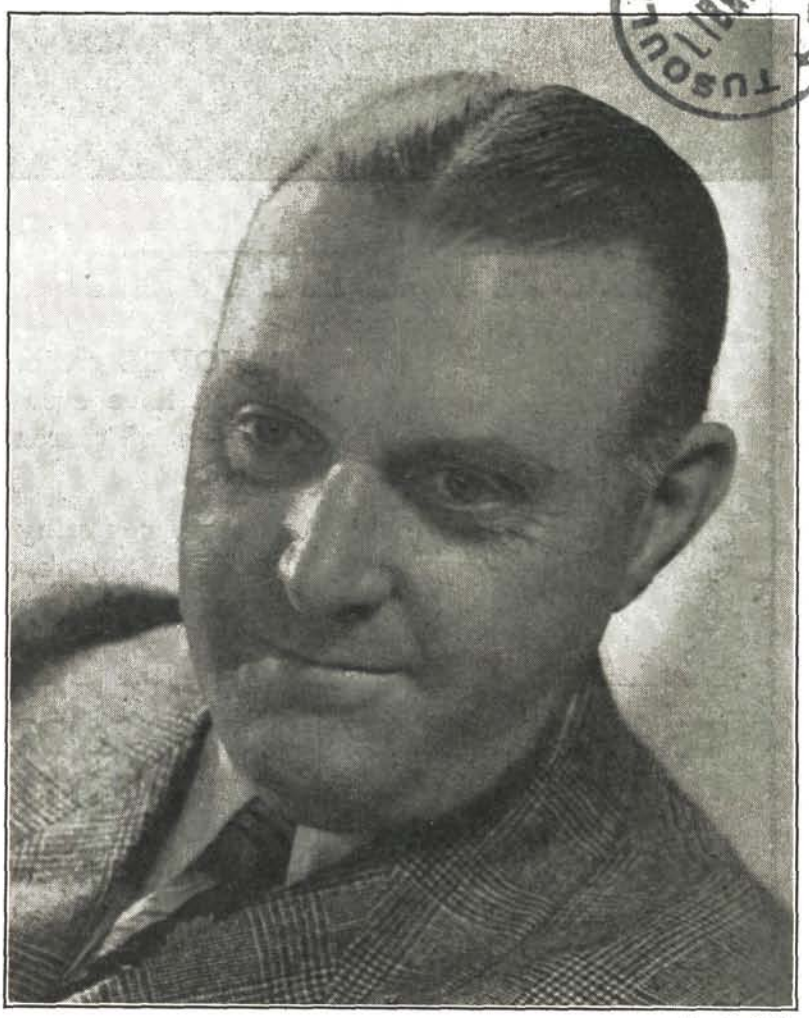

Harold Stein

KENNETH ROBERTS

"The hunger and desire of the nation just about to break westward into the untrodden lands, the tangle of cupidities and venalities and stupidities that in great part conditioned them—they are in 'Northwest Passage' as they have not been in our fiction before" . . .

(See page 5)

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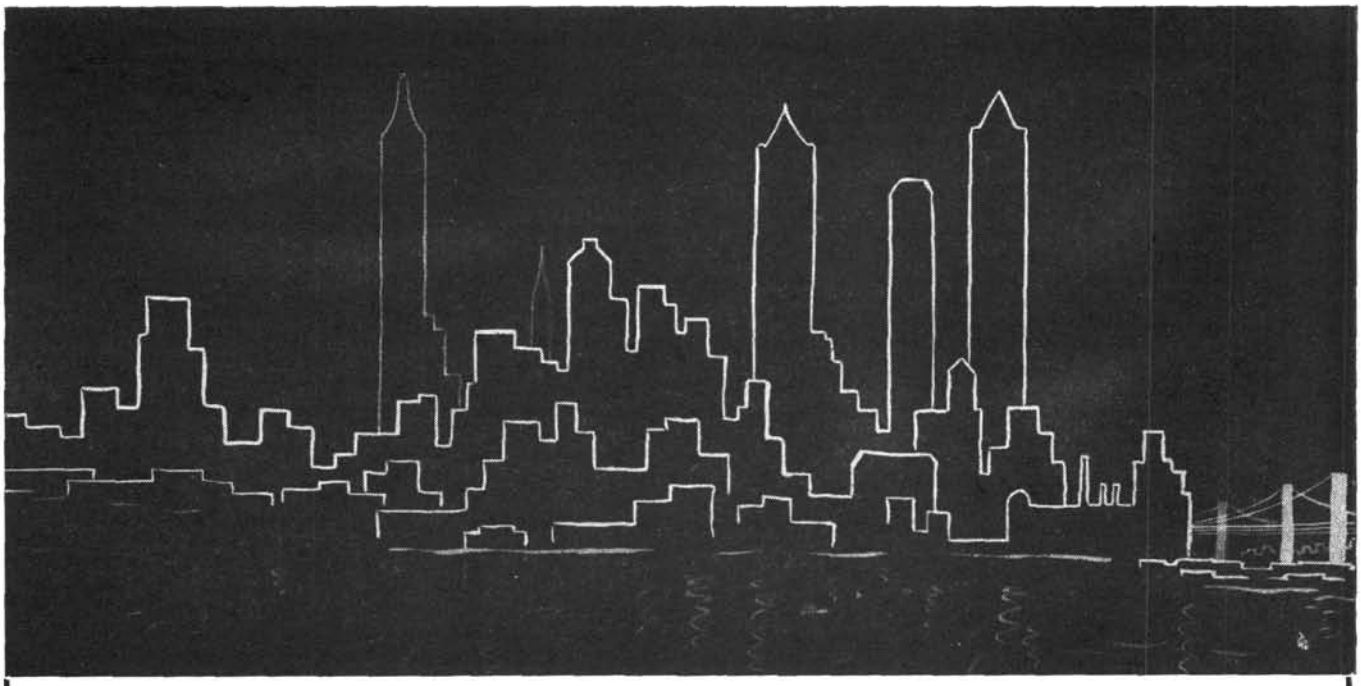

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The Pulp Magazines

BY FLETCHER PRATT

SOME years ago the lamented *New York World*, being, as usual, overrun with cub reporters, tried an experiment. A number of the young men were scattered through the stands at the then current World's Series with instructions to record for posterity examples of the folk-humor of America as excited by baseball. The outcome was a disappointment to the editor who thought of the idea; he got nothing but such witticisms as "Throw him out!" and garbled quotations from the previous day's columns of Heywood Broun, Bill McGeehan, and Damon Runyon.

A similar result awaits expeditions into the vast jungle of the pulpwoods. Instead of giant orchids and remarkable butterflies the explorer finds only the familiar flora and fauna of more temperate literary climes, usually stunted in growth, tasteless to the palate, and proliferating with the speed of *amœba limax*. In fact, perhaps the most striking feature of the pulp literature industry is its imitativeness; or perhaps, it is the second most striking, the basic startling fact being the industry's agreement that originality is a positive error. Every other business makes at least a pretense of friendliness to new ideas; but in the pulps desperate originality would consist in making the villain of a gangster story an Argentine ranchero instead of the usual Italo-American, without otherwise altering the plot.

There are two methods of approaching this more-than-Oriental passion for reproductiveness. One is that adopted by Mr. Harold B. Hersey*, a pulp editor and publisher of extensive experience. He offers to recruit a staff of professional pulp writers, and with them to get out an issue of *Saturday Evening Post*, *Collier's*, or *Cosmopolitan* which will satisfy the subscribers better than the one edited by the magazine's own staff. (It is probable that he could make good, although the success would be that of a Sargent portrait, which is a straight-face caricature, more true to life than life itself.) Amplifying, he explains that *SEP*, *Collier's*, and *Cosmo* are produced for people of defective imagination who need the stimulus of these publications to entertain themselves with vicarious adventure, whereas the pulps are for individuals of no imagination whatever, who require sharper stimuli and will swallow more incredible adventures. The difference between the pops and pulps (says he) is one of degree; both are in the business of purveying predigested day-dreams to people who cannot dream for themselves.

SITUATION IS EVERYTHING

Illustration for "Stranger from Laredo" by Eugene Cunningham, Action Stories, August 1937. Courtesy of Fiction House.

This has the advantage of accounting for one of the most curious geographical features of the country of the pulps—the permanence of its landmarks. Readers without imagination are torn from their bearings by unfamiliarity. Their frozen day-dreams must essentially be the same one, indefinitely repeated; any change, in authorship, character, format of the magazine, repels them. They find no difficulty in accepting the fact that Bill Barnes remains a youth of twenty after having passed through enough air adventures to make him a rival of Methusalem, or that the Shadow is still alive after being killed in a hundred different ways. Mr. Hersey also accounts for two institutions of the pulps unique in literature (and which, incidentally, he does not mention)—"house names," authors without any real existence, whose signatures are appended to any good story the editor buys, and "house characters," whose names are written into purchased stories instead of those the author put there.

Yet with this explanation and no other it would be difficult to see how tens of thousands of readers (pulp circulations rarely run over 100,000) could accept as from the same pen the work of half a dozen different minds. Mr. Hersey is undoubtedly right in saying that these readers have no common characteristic but a lack of imagination, that they cannot be set off by age, sex, industrial group, or social status. He knows, because like all pulp editors, he has kept in close touch with his public through "Which story do you prefer?" coupons, readers' letter columns, and similar devices which are never absent from the pulps.

The response indicates that, in spite of their lack of imagination, a large percentage of the readers are extremely observant, and a quite surprising number above the average in intelligence. The slightest error in the special field to which a pulp is devoted brings sacks of indignant communications. Hersey himself received over a hundred letters protesting that one writer had disarranged the corridors on the interior of a battleship, and nearly as many when the hero of a Western used the wrong kind of revolver; your correspondent has seen a letter with four

* PULPWOOD EDITOR. By Harold B. Hersey. New York: Frederick A. Stokes Co. 1937. $3.

Next Week

RELIGION MAKES THE FRONT PAGE
By CHARLES W. FERGUSON

INTEGRITY: THE LIFE OF GEORGE W. NORRIS
By RICHARD L. NEUBERGER and STEPHEN B. KAHN
Reviewed by William Allen White

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pages of abstruse mathematical calculation to demonstrate that the route taken by an interplanetary vehicle in another story would carry it dangerously close to the moons of Jupiter.

Why should these readers fail to swallow a statement that the quaiacum test is specific for human blood, yet accept without cavil the fact that Doc Savage writes in different styles during successive weeks? The answer is that Doc Savage does not write in different styles; all pulp writers, at least all writers for the same pulp, write alike.

Why? Mr. Hersey would say that it is because they follow a formula which has been found successful, which is perfectly true but explains nothing. The answer seems to lie in a consideration, not of the product, but of the producer. The average pulp writer is young, not necessarily in a physical sense (though there is at least one of eighteen, who is doing pretty well for himself)—but a beginning writer. He usually crashes the pulps with a story no other magazine would accept, because it is imitative of some well known fist to a point one degree removed from plagiary. The characteristic that sets most young imitators below their models is an overpowering interest in situation, to the exclusion of plot, description, and character. (Consider the young Stevenson and how rapidly the "New Arabian Nights" stories lose interest after he has assembled a number of antithetical characters under bizarre circumstances.)

Now this pivoting on situation is exactly what the pulps demand. Most pulp stories have no plot; merely proceed from the original *données* through situation after situation till the author allows one of these moments to crystallize out into a solution at the end of his contracted wordage. The moment character enters, the pulp reader (who, remember, has no imagination) finds himself before an incomprehensible; the moment he has to consider plot, he is forced to turn back to page fourteen and is brought out of his day-dream with a jerk; description is permissible, but only for atmosphere, and it must not hold up movement. When any of these elements is written into a pulp story, the writer is rapped over the knuckles with a rejection slip, forced to remain a young writer, to almost-plagiarize, even himself, and to resume his preoccupation with situation. A pulp writer with whom your correspondent was acquainted sold the same story, altering nothing but the names and the few rods of description (perhaps eight per cent of the total wordage) to a Western, a detective, a gangster, a World War, and a supernatural pulp in succession—and the story was one originally lifted from E. T. A. Hoffman, stripped of its character drawing and locale.

Naturally the number of authors whose work will stand this type of imitation is limited. The list is a rather curious one, seeming to share only the characteristic that they are writers who appeal to younger writers. Alexandre Dumas is, of course, the great favorite—an Alexandre Dumas in strictly modern dress, whose three musketeers, one a ruined gentleman, one a gasconading and not too intellectual physical giant, one cherishing an eternally unsatisfied love for a lady, turn up again and again, as the protagonists of flying adventures, as cowboys, or buddies of the regiment. (Aramis gets left out—rather too complicated a character for pulps.)

"MOST PULP STORIES HAVE NO PLOT"

Conan Doyle is the ancestor of shoals of detective pulps as Owen Wister and Eugene Manlove Rhodes are of the Westerns. Curious note: Doyle never allowed Holmes to be funny, while Wister and Rhodes permitted their characters to make wisecracks, and to this day there is a taboo on humor among detective magazines and a demand for it from the Westerns. Anyone who remembers Mrs. E. D. E. N. Southworth and "The Duchess" will probably be surprised at how close a resemblance to their manner the love pulps achieve; indeed one of them still uses as a cover an old woodcut originally prepared as an illustration for one of Mrs. Hungerford's yarns. The thrill pulps go straight to Hoffman and "The Mysteries of Udolpho" and the "Smoosh pulps" (trade name for those with stories of seduction and photos of semi-nude chorus girls) appear to be the product of a mésalliance between Elinor Glyn and the author of "Fanny Hill." Stevenson and Joseph Conrad (but remember he had to go to a pulp for his first American audience) have spawned a school of seagoing pulps, which are seldom very successful; Jules Verne and H. G. Wells are behind the pseudo-science pulps, which acknowledge their debt so openly that the archetype, *Amazing Stories*, runs a picture of Verne's tomb at its masthead and filled Vol. I, No. 1, with out-of-copyright stories by these two authors.

The question which naturally occurs is with regard to the young authors after they have received their rap over the knuckles. Does that turn them into literary prostitutes? Mr. Hersey naturally says not—"Conscientious, hardworking people, who think nothing of grinding the mill in a routine no other white collar worker would consider. It is surprising how few of them use liquor—" but "too many who have been promoted to the smooth-papers are apt to look with scorn on the pulpwoods." He goes on with remarks about their fundamental literary qualities, forgetting that he himself has pronounced the fatal word "promoted."

The fact is that writing for the pulps is a dog's life, and very few stay in it who can escape. The beginner's pay is fantastically low—a third of a cent a word average, sometimes as low as a tenth. The minute a writer gets out of the beginner class (there is hardly any transition stage), beyond house names and house characters, he is a featured author. His rate jumps to two cents a word or higher in some cases, but there is a catch in it. To maintain himself as a star he must appear in at least every other issue of a weekly or bi-weekly pulp, and with the "complete novels" (20,000-45,000 words) pulp readers favor. Or put it this way—even on two cents a word he cannot remain a success on anything less than 15,000 words a week.

The average speed is much higher; W. Bert Foster, during his final illness, wrote "very slowly—three to five thousand words a day"; Frederick Van Renssalaer Dey, the original Nick Carter, turned out a 45,000 word novel every week for years on end; Dr. D. H. Keller once had three serials running in as many pulps at the same time, beside several assorted shorts.

Such a schedule permits not the slightest pause for revision; first draft is final draft. Even then it involves a backbreaking amount of toil, of which the worst feature is that the pulp star dare not allow himself a vacation, or he will have the

(*Continued on page 14*)

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Roberts Ranges

NORTHWEST PASSAGE. By Kenneth Roberts. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Company. 1937. $2.75.

Reviewed by BERNARD DEVOTO

MR. ROBERTS'S new book has been adopted by the Book-of-the-Month Club, and the first and less interesting half of it was serialized in *The Saturday Evening Post.* A reviewer's impulse is to remark how much more is given to him that hath, and let it go at that. But "Northwest Passage" makes it necessary to take Mr. Roberts rather more seriously than before, for he has become a more serious novelist.

His earlier books, the stories of Arundel and the two sea stories, are conventional historical narratives, traditionally romantic in outline but original and realistic in detail, unreflective, rapid, and usually superficial in their feeling for history. By superficial I do not mean to derogate from Mr. Roberts's rich inventiveness nor to deny that he has a fine eye for the characteristic, the picturesque, and the historically appropriate; I mean that he has been indifferent to the energies and movements of which the events he describes were a specific expression, that he has not bothered about their relation to the age. Thus the chronicles of Arundel are first-rate action stories in a historical setting, swift and frequently absorbing stories of war and hardship, but they are not historical novels in the sense that, say, "Henry Esmond" and "The Scarlet Letter" are. "Arundel," for instance, exhibits none of the collapsing colonial system and little of the emerging nation. "Northwest Passage" has much of the former and a good deal of the latter, and that is only one of the ways in which it departs from the type of the other books and gets into historical realization.

Through the earlier books Mr. Roberts steadily developed as a story teller and as an antiquarian. In the new one the antiquarian is quite willing to interrupt the story teller: the *Post* was able to carve away large parts from even the galloping first half without impairing the narrative, and the limited edition of the novel runs to a supplementary volume of source material most of which Mr. Roberts has turned up for the first time, and the rest of which he has critically annotated.

Most of "Northwest Passage" just precedes "Arundel" in time, and several characters reappear, notably Cap Huff. The hero is Robert Rogers, the scout, explorer, Indian fighter, promoter, speculator, adventurer, soldier of fortune, and Tory recruiting agent whom readers of Parkman will identify as the most skillful commander of colonial rangers during the French and Indian War. Narrated by a young artist who (in the Catlin manner and rather anachronistically) wants to paint the Indians, the first half of the novel deals with the raid of Rogers' Rangers on St. Francis and the return through early winter and without provisions across northern Vermont to the Connecticut. The raid was the most spectacular episode in a war sufficiently horrible, the return from it was one of the most agonizing marches in history, and it had a macabre climax when the supplies which had been sent to the rendezvous on the Connecticut started back to Crown Point just a few hours before Rogers's party arrived. The story is well fitted to Mr. Roberts's hand, and he tells it with the dash and gusto of his earlier books.

But there is an important change when Langdon Towne, the war ended, goes to London to study painting, and Mr. Roberts turns to Rogers's ambition to discover

DRAWING BY WINOLD REISS, *from the jacket of "Northwest Passage."*

the Northwest Passage. The pace slackens, Mr. Roberts gets interested in challenging Thackeray, readjusting the verdicts of history, and pondering its less palpable forces—and the novel changes in kind and considerably improves. The challenge to Thackeray comes off very well. There are a few unnecessary displays of historical characters in walk-on parts, and an occasional cheap touch of the kind which has a character make a prediction which is grotesque in the light of what we now know, or has another one call James Boswell an ass and lament the time Johnson wastes talking with him. But, this granted, the London of the period comes variously and most amazingly, to life: the London of "characters," eccentrics, grotesques, Mohocks; of Hogarth, Clive, Reynolds, Benjamin Franklin, the young Burke, Sir John Fielding, the Royal Society; of gin-shops, debtors' prisons, slums, beggars, "monsters"; of Townsend and the Bute ministry and the Stamp Act and the skeptical Whigs. No communities lived so vividly in Mr. Roberts's earlier work, and you will read this evocation with as much satisfaction as you ever got from "The Virginians."

Even so, it is not the best part of "Northwest Passage." Rogers's efforts at length get him the governorship of Michilimackinac, Langdon Towne goes with him to paint the Western Indians, and suddenly Mr. Roberts is animating his material with an imaginative warmth that he had not shown us before. The hunger and desire of the nation just about to break westward into the untrodden lands, the tangle of cupidities and venalities and stupidities that in great part conditioned them—they are in "Northwest Passage" as they have not been in our fiction before. The soldiery, the traders, the *voyageurs,* and the first wave of the pioneers are done with fine versatility, and the Indians are done with genuine magnificence. Parkman and a good many others are at the author's shoulder while he writes, but his treatment of the Western tribes displays historical imagination of a high order. And we are all likely to be in Mr. Roberts's debt: the signs point to an early extension to precisely that ground by the present wave of historical novels, and it is good to have a high and authoritative standard set at the beginning.

In short, the second half of "Northwest Passage" is not only a good story, it moves on a plane of understanding and perception that only the best kind of historical fiction achieves.

As a historian, Mr. Roberts is something of a revisionist. Jonathan Carver was not so scaly as he makes him out, and the specifications for a romantic hero have forced a lot of plastic surgery on Major Rogers. As a novelist, he remains conventional in all his detailed characterization and quite uninterested in psychology. No one in the book has much intellectual life, no one meditates much, no one is an introvert; there is no Henry Esmond, there is not even an Athos or an Aramis. The love story is trite and Ann, its heroine, writes letters far less like an eighteenth-century gentlewoman than like a twentieth-century boarding-school girl. On the other hand, the book is not defaced by archaisms or self-conscious period work. Mr. Roberts wisely contents himself with an occasional touch of formality or floridity in dialogue, an occasional obsolete expression, and a mass of homely and appropriate details, so that the atmosphere passes off quite naturally. It is a first-rate job, a novel that is read with intent interest and is sure to be remembered with satisfaction, head and shoulders above most of the period pieces that have recently come into favor.

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Source Book on Anatole France

ANATOLE FRANCE. By E. Preston Dargan. New York: Oxford University Press. 1937. $5.

Reviewed by M. L. RADOFF

PROFESSOR Dargan himself has disclaimed the qualifying "definitive" in discussing, in his Introduction, the object and scope of his book. But that is caviling. While it is true that much of the correspondence is as yet unpublished and some of it still withheld from scholars because the correspondents are alive, this life is still definitive, for it has exhausted not only all the primary material available including the works themselves, but also all the tremendous amount of secondary material which has appeared, for the most part since France's death in 1924.

The greatest fault of Dargan's book is one directly derived from its virtue of complete intellectual honesty, namely its great length—700 pages, which cover the author's life and works to the death of Mme. Caillavet and his entrance into the Academy in 1896. Much of the most interesting work and a great deal of the spiritual and social activity of France came later, especially during and after the Dreyfus case, during the war when, moved for the moment by the terrible emotional crisis of his country, he betrayed the skepticism which he had always professed to urge the combating of German militarism, and still later when immediately before his death he embraced, if fleetingly and with reservations, the cause of socialism.

But to have done the whole work at once would have meant at least another volume and another ten years of effort. With somewhat different procedure, however, Professor Dargan might have done it all in one fairly modest volume. He follows the scientific method in *Litteraturgeschichte* which he learned at the Germanic Johns Hopkins when it had just cast its Goettingen swaddling clothes and from the various German universities where he finished his education. Every detail of the life is presented, the opinion of every commentator is given—"every" is no exaggeration as a glance at the bibliography will show—even that of such discredited and stupid men as Brousson. The evidence is then weighed, summed up, and judged. "My belief is that, in matters of taste and judgment, something like a true verdict may be reached only through the accumulation, the sifting and pondering of the better sort of suffrages." But the very useful purpose of making this "true verdict" known to readers with less time than scholars and professional litterateurs command cannot be accomplished with the product of such a method.

ANATOLE FRANCE ON "LE TEMPS"

Professor Dargan has anticipated this criticism:

> My treatment is not fictionized. Such a method in the present case would seem both unnecessary and unwarranted . . . In biographical as in historical writing, the truth is the all-important consideration. To reach it, no pains should be avoided, few compromises should be made. Neither writer nor reader should fear occasional tedium, if thereby a fuller veracity is attained. And the scholar thus toiling reaps this compensation—that the truth, if not "stranger than fiction," is often more richly rewarding. Such I certainly feel to be the case in the career of Anatole France.

While the reader should not fear tedium, alas! he quite often does, and while it is academically wrong to fictionize a biography, to write a *vie romancé*, there are middle ways which while not encyclopedically inclusive of all the truth are yet accurate and interesting.

There can be no argument with Professor Dargan about his facts. Where one disagrees with his judgment, the alternatives are never hidden and the reader need only choose to his own taste. Professor Dargan writes a smooth and thrifty style if not a brilliant and attractive one, and he has done an excellent job both of the compiling and the setting of the vast amount of information he has gathered. But the final product is a reference book. Specialists and reviewers for the learned journals will read it carefully, but the large group of young men who were freshmen in the early twenties and who swore by Anatole France will find it heavy and dull and full of tedium, they will not be able to recapture in it the thrill of the Anatole France who symbolized to them the gentle skepticism and the symmetrical classicism which bridged the short period between the hysteria of the war and the black despair of the reaction. All the disjecta membra have been assembled, but Anatole France remains throughout the subject of a thesis.

Too Many Ladies

THE LIFE OF RILEY. By Harvey Fergusson. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1937. $2.

Reviewed by JAMES D. HART

MORGAN RILEY was the son of a saloon-keeper in a Southwestern frontier town, who carried on his father's place, the "Lucky Spot," as a pool hall and cigar store which failed to keep pace with the community's growing civilization. His mother died when he was young and Morgan grew up without the refinement she might have given him. He grew up to drink, hunt, go to war as a thrill, and above all—to live with women. Before 1917 Morgan was a football hero who spent his life sleeping with girls who varied from the little Mexican on the other side of the tracks to the daughter of the town's leading banker. After 1918 he was temporarily a war hero, but, though older, he was no wiser. A beauty parlor, a country club, and Rotary meetings—the symbols of twentieth-century civilization—came to the frontier. While other men made money, Riley made girls. Riley had a tremendous amount of feeling, but no aptitude for thinking. His mentality floundered in his sensory apparatus. All he wanted was some duck shooting, a pipe, a highball with four fingers of good Bourbon in it, and a woman to keep him comfortable.

This simple, pleasant animal life might have made the subject of a good book, but Riley had a way with the women, and the women have a way with the book. Each chapter introduces a new one to satisfy his urge, and the succession of blondes, brunettes, and redheads becomes monotonous. Riley's youthful, tender fumbling with sex are sensitively handled; his later, hard, matter-of-fact animal urge becomes dull. Possibly to compensate for Morgan's unalterable sameness, the people who come into his life are frequently over-dramatized. If one of these minor characters is sick and weak, he is immediately portrayed as nearly impotent and spending his days in troubled fantasies in which he ravishes women who had never even given him a glance. If one of Morgan's passing women friends is a shy young girl living a lonely life on a distant ranch, she is characterized as a virginal blossom to which all the chivalry of Western manhood bows down. The women who drift in and out of Morgan's life are very different, but, as Morgan wants only one thing from them, their differences of character are forgotten in their one basic similarity. Morgan spends his life maneuvering his way to a bed, and just as he fails to perceive any tragedy in his wasted life so do we feel inclined to take him at his own estimate.

James D. Hart is on the English faculty of the University of California.

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Doctor of Letters

TAKE A LETTER, PLEASE! A Cyclopedia of Business and Social Correspondence. By John B. Opdycke. New York: Funk & Wagnalls. 1937. $2.75.

Reviewed by E. B. WHITE

IT'S hard to believe that anyone had the patience to prepare such a monumental study of letter writing. "Take a Letter, Please!" is the Britannica of correspondence, the Who's Who of the epistolary art. It contains hundreds of letters, good and bad, from famous people and obscure people, together with many lessons in usage and style. It tells you how to write a letter, what clichés to avoid, what effects to strive for, how to fold it after it's written.

Mr. Opdycke's theme is that the world needs more letters which breathe the personality of the writer—more letters that are "alive." I don't happen to agree with him, but that doesn't mean that this isn't quite a book. Certainly the desire of everyone is to write entertainingly through the mail. One's morning mail, nowadays, positively crawls with personality. There is, it seems to me, a kind of deadly cuteness which has crept into social and business correspondence lately, sugaring it and making it hard to swallow so soon after breakfast. One gets cute letters from laundries, chatty notes from restaurants, letters dripping with charm and whimsy from sportswear houses. And if there are any literary people among one's friends, the morning mail is indeed formidable: letters so full of graceful writing there isn't a square inch of pertinent reading matter to the page.

On the whole, Mr. Opdycke in his book rather encourages this sort of thing, I'm afraid. Take, for example, these two parallel letters—one he calls "characterful," the other "characterless." The first (characterful) starts: "Have you any idea, I wonder, how easy it is to put a thing aside, for just two minutes, and then forget all about it?" The second (characterless) starts: "Thanking you for your esteemed favor of March third, wish to say I shall be happy to comply with your much appreciated request." Now, this last letter is the one which suits my taste, characterless though it may be. It doesn't begin by asking me a silly question, for one thing.

However, this is quibbling. Mr. Opdycke has assembled easily the most comprehensive and amusing lot of letters you will find anywhere in a textbook. Letters of apology, of appreciation, of condolence, of gratitude, of dissatisfaction. One can read Mark Twain's withering complaint to the Western Union Telegraph Company, Charles Lamb apologizing to his hostess for having got drunk the night before, William James wheedling fifty dollars out of Henry Higginson for a friend in the Mills Hotel, Henry Longfellow apologizing for forgetting his umbrella, Abe Lincoln encouraging the young Grant. Such letters are good reading. Somebody (I forget who) once said: "Never write a letter, and never throw one away." Studying this book, one can see that this is good advice, though stuffy. A letter is a peculiarly diaphanous document—one which the writer would gladly buy back after a year, in order to enjoy the exquisite sensation of burning it.

In 1929 a London department store (Harrods) asked H. G. Wells, G. B. Shaw, and Arnold Bennett to write some signed advertising for them. Mr. Opdycke publishes the three letters of refusal which Harrods received—fascinating stuff, all of it. Bennett, who seemed to have no conception of the issue at stake, replied that he'd like to oblige but might lose caste if he did. Shaw wrote a passionate denunciation of the request— ". . . a writer who has been consecrated by Fame to the service of the public, and has thus become prophet as well as author, must take wages in no other service." Wells said approximately the same thing; and his was the best letter of the three—shortest and most thoughtful.

The chapters on usage and style should be helpful both to the composers of letters and to the stenographers who turn them out. The author points out right ways and wrong ways, and it is all very clear and sensible. It may comfort you to know that "Your Mr. Jones" is no longer considered good usage. And it may put the fear of God into you to learn that the sloppy enunciation of an executive into the tube of a dictaphone once resulted in the phrase: "This guy's the limit" instead of "The sky's the limit."

In one little matter of style, which is a pet of mine, Mr. Opdycke failed to live up to my hopes—the matter of how to write the date. He gives several accepted forms, including this silly but prevalent method:

October
Twelfth
1 9 3 7

The system I advocate (without any success so far) is: 12 October 1937. It's simple, it's clean, it separates the numerals that ought to be separated, it requires no punctuation, and it doesn't employ any preposterous word like "twelfth."

Correspondence managers in big firms will undoubtedly learn a lot from this book. Just how much the rest of us will be helped, it's hard to say. In a list of good opening sentences for friendly letters I find this:

"I am going to be married today."

This is, very likely, a good opening for a letter; yet unless a person happened to be lately betrothed, he might easily stall around all afternoon trying to compose a satisfactory equivalent. Applying the principle of the startling first sentence, the letter writer might conceivably begin: "My dear Lockridge, I am having my stomach pumped out tomorrow."

As in so many other forms of writing, a great deal really depends on circumstances.

E. B. White, long on the editorial staff of The New Yorker, *is the author of "The Lady Is Cold," and co-author with James Thurber of "Is Sex Necessary?"*

"HE USED TO START THE DAY WRITING LETTERS TO EDITORS."

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English '37

The Novelist and the Reader: II

THERE are fashions in kinds of novels and fashions in ways of writing. To inquire what produces a fashion or supersedes one is outside our intent; it is enough to observe that no type or style or method is immortal. There are always critics who mistake a new preference of the most or the best people for a belatedly discovered but eternal law of art, and who announce that this is the right kind of novel and that hereafter no other kind can be written. When "Ulysses" appeared, a wholly subjective novel with stratified symbolisms and intricate interior mechanisms, such critics told us that Mr. Joyce had made the writing of any other kind of novel impossible, or at least ridiculous; a diminishing remnant of them now assert that, at any rate, he has done so with "Work in Progress," which would appear to have made novels like "Ulysses" ridiculous or at least amateurish. Following the appearance of "Ulysses" many imitations and adaptations of it were written, and a brisk if somewhat esoteric fashion got under way. It did not last long, and the student concludes that Mr. Joyce has given instruments to the art of fiction, not limits or necessary conditions, and that though many novelists use those instruments for brief passages and occasional effects, few care to use them for Mr. Joyce's purposes or to the exclusion of other instruments.

A few years after "Ulysses" Mr. Hemingway's "The Sun Also Rises" evoked from some critics, more locally and on a smaller scale, the same assertions of finality and universality. Except for occasional modulations in which Mr. Hemingway was patently remembering Mr. Joyce, it was wholly different in kind and in manner. Where Joyce was as subjective as possible Hemingway was as objective as possible; the greater part of the characters' behavior in "Ulysses" consisted of thought-processes, and all of it was governed by energies and patterns of the unconscious mind; that of the characters in "The Sun Also Rises" exhibited no thought-process whatever and appeared to be a form of conditioned reflex. Leopold Bloom was a series of free associations; Lady Ashley was a tropism. Yet some of the critics who had recently been convinced that fiction had not really begun until Joyce now concluded that it had begun over with Hemingway. The usual number of imitators agreed with them, and since the imitable part of a novelist is his technique, there was soon a rash of novels in which neither thought-process nor vocabulary got very far beyond a grunt. That phase ended, and today only Mr. Hemingway writes like Mr. Hemingway, which is as it should be and shows the fate of critical finalities.

These are primarily fashions of technique, but the same phenomenon may be observed in other aspects of fiction. Many proletarian critics have repealed their earlier, enthusiastic legislation which determined how only it was possible to write fiction, but while the edicts were still in force they left the novelist free to use any technique he might choose (though the proletarian novelist usually chose that of Mr. Dos Passos) but prescribed the material he must deal with, the moods he must deal with it in, and the "values" and "line" he must honor. The confusion of such thinking is illustrated by the recent remark of a throbber on the left wing that there is no difference between sociological and psychological fiction. The statement is either mysticism or nonsense, which, for the purposes of criticism, are hard to tell apart. There is no special sanctity in adjectives, and you may if you like call the two kinds red and black or C-major and E-minor, but common sense and common readers distinguish between "The Years" and "The Big Money." Subject matter, treatment, interest of the author, and intended appeal to the reader differ in so many ways that we take it for granted that Mr. Dos Passos and Mrs. Woolf are doing different things. Some proletarian critics, in fact, even when the school was active, acknowledged that they were, and contented themselves with calling Mrs. Woolf's kind of novel a morally wrong kind. The same summons of ethics to the support of fashion may be observed in the belief that it is socially right to write "group novels" like those of M. Romains but socially wrong to write novels in which individual experience is the primary value.

We are not concerned with right and wrong kinds of novels, nor with right and wrong ways of writing them, and our concern with fashions is, for the moment, only to point out that they exist and have played an important part in the history of fiction. Looking back over that history, however, one may observe some developments which fashion has not wholly shaped and which have been maintained through a variety of fashions. They have fluctuated, they have not got this far without interruption or without reversing themselves, and it would be a serious error to think of them as immutable or to suppose that they will go on forever. They are important for our study, and a great many of them are purely developments in technique. Some of them may be regarded as attempts of a heterogeneous or "impure" art to purify itself as much as may be by determining its own most relevant methods.

Fiction is an impure art in the exact sense in which sculpture is a pure one. Or, if you prefer, in which poetry is a pure one. Later on we shall be saying that fiction is a dynamic art, in the exact sense in which sculpture is a static one, but our first emphasis must be on its heterogeneity—which should require no demonstration. "Ulysses" and "The Sun Also Rises" are novels, but it must be remembered that "Tarzan of the Apes" is a novel too, and so are "Uncle Tom's Cabin," "Remembrance of Things Past," "The Three Musketeers," "Alice in Wonderland," "Against the Grain," "The Call of the Wild," "Gil Blas," "The Magic Mountain," "Looking Backward," and "Memoirs of a Prostitute." Novels are written about every conceivable subject in every conceivable way, and you will not get very far when you try to define a novel. It is not enough to say that a novel deals with the emotional or imaginative presentation of experience, for not all novels do, or that it is a narrative of imaginary or imaginatively touched up human beings or of anthropomorphically presented animals, for not all are. Effectively, all we can say is that novels are printed and, presumably, are read.

So far as we are concerned the reading is the crux. Novels are written in order to be read, and technique is the application of methods designed to insure their being read. Now, precisely as the developing movies have borrowed from fiction and drama and other arts methods of narrative, exposition, emphasis, condensation, and symbolism, on the way to finding implicit methods of their own, so fiction borrowed methods from other arts and worked out methods of its own. A purification, or at least a refinement, in their use has been one of the developments we are considering. A convenient way to approach its more intricate problems is to begin with the simple one of the direct expression of the novelist's ideas.

When Henry Fielding wanted to put into "Tom Jones" some ideas of his on the credibility of the marvelous, he did so straight, without reference to the fictitious story he was writing, and in his own person. He wrote Chapter I of Book VIII, a conventional, graceful, gentleman's

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essay by Henry Fielding. When Mr. Hervey Allen wanted to do much the same thing, he did not write an essay in his own person but presented the ideas as a meditation of Anthony's. There was nothing essentially modern in the device, for within a few years of "Tom Jones," Sterne was presenting ideas on the marvelous as a monologue by Mr. Shandy. But Mr. Allen was forced to express his ideas on the marvelous through the mechanism of the novel and to identify them with the emotional content of the novel, and Sterne was not forced to. Thackeray's passages on the waste and horror of war are not independent essays but a by-product of the action of "Vanity Fair," and they are quite in key with the emotions of the characters: they are closer to the fiction Thackeray was writing than Fielding's essay was to his. But they are not fused with that fiction—they are separable from the novel. Mr. Hemingway's feeling about war is exactly that of Thackeray, but it does not appear *as such* in "A Farewell to Arms," and it cannot be separated from the novel. Mr. Hemingway himself is not present anywhere in the novel. As a puppet-master he may move the characters as he likes and put into their mouths such words and sentiments as may please him, so long as the audience accepts them as the words and actions of the puppets, but he may not appear on the stage in his own person.

Between Fielding's time and ours a sentiment, or a convention, has developed which holds: that an essay is one kind of thing and a novel is another kind of thing, that a mixture of kinds is improper or ineffective, and especially that the interposition of the novelist himself is discordant. Certainly the sentiment is not universal; there are many readers who do not share it and some novelists who do not respect it. But, as a psychological rather than an esthetic principle, it is binding on most readers and novelists, and it is one of the determining principles of the modern art of fiction. It is one of the purifications, or refinements, of fiction on the way to its own implicit methods. Interpolated essays or apostrophes are, of course, a simple and even blatant example of the principle, whose greatest importance is in its subtlest applications. We shall find that the momentary hesitation of the reader which we started in to explain frequently arises because the novelist has departed from the principle so slightly that he is not aware of having done so.

But a novel is related: it is told by the novelist to the reader, without being projected through the persons of actors on a stage or a screen. How can a novelist relate his fiction without appearing in his own person? Much of the technique of fiction hinges on that question. The novelist is constantly endeavoring to relate his fiction without seeming to relate it himself. We shall next consider some of the devices he uses in this endeavor.

(To be continued)

Letters to the Editor: *Two Harvard Writers; Library Book-Buying*

Flandrau and Wister

SIR:—In his article "The Minnesota Muse" appearing in your issue of June 12th, Mr. James Gray with rare discernment and keen appreciation has fittingly placed Charles Flandrau as a writer and as a contributing factor in shaping the literary output of that particular locality which for many years has been his legal residence—if not his home.

In pursuance of his subject Mr. Gray quite properly confined himself to those writers who have grown up in Minnesota. I wonder, however, if, in reading what is here set forth with such fidelity and insight about Charles Flandrau, a great many of your readers will not instinctively bracket him with another writer from another state who springs from a totally different environment. I have in mind Owen Wister of Philadelphia.

Both Charles Flandrau and Owen Wister graduated from Harvard. Both early in their careers produced books—the one, "Viva Mexico" and the other, "The Virginian"—which, if not to be classed as masterpieces, are of eminent distinction, each of its kind. It is characteristic of both these writers that their literary productions occur at infrequent intervals: that is to say, they write when they please and never under pressure.

Charles Flandrau's appraisement of the work of his contemporary Owen Wister is not—as far as I know—a matter of record, but some years ago while passing through St. Paul, and in an interview with representatives of the press, it was Owen Wister who reminded the reporters that they had in their midst a writer who, for charm of style and literary acumen in discursive writing, was without a peer among the writers of his generation.

RICHARDS G. DEACON.

Philadelphia, Pa.

Reply to Miss Forinash

SIR:—It really seems to me that at the time of an A. L. A. convention the *Saturday Review* shouldn't publish such an article as Ruth Forinash's with the implication that such a book selection procedure was characteristic of a small library, or any library.

Few librarians are, or should be, as serenely complacent as Miss Forinash seems to be, nor so completely lacking in a sense of humor. "Our town is remote from intellectual centers and unconcerned about the matter." That the librarian and board take their reading seriously is all too evident and all too regrettable. They won't admit "Main Street," or "Elmer Gantry," nor Hemingway, nor Stribling, nor Wolfe, and I say, can such restrictions result in any vital representation of American Literature? I don't think so! And to eliminate humor is to drastically deviate from their stated idealistic trend in guiding the reading tastes of children. It is inseparable from a normal human existence.

I am very skeptical as to just how successful such a procedure would be. Sauk Centre has two extremes in her native sons; James Hendryx and Sinclair Lewis, and it is only right that the library should have both, the result being that the patrons read various types with equal enjoyment.

If such an article epitomizes library procedure in a small community, heaven pity the work ahead for the library profession. I can draw a sigh of relief that the Board here does not assume the duties of a book selector and that they have enough of a sense of humor not to impose their tastes upon a varied community by giving them only the pure and simple.

ELOISE EBERT.

Bryant Library Association,
Sauk Centre, Minn.

The Saturday Review *will welcome correspondence from other librarians about Miss Forinash's article and Miss Ebert's letter.*—THE EDITORS.

Why "The Years" Is Selling

SIR:—You ask why "The Years" is a best seller. I can't give the whole answer, but I can tell you why I bought it, who never purchased any of Mrs. Woolf's earlier books.

I have read about this lady for the last seven years, I believe. At first I paid little attention: just another woman trying to write. The reports about her continued, always respectful, sometimes laudatory. I saw her picture, and called her appearance "peculiar" at first, then "unusual," finally "intriguing." There came the monthly occasion for me to buy a book. "The Years"—"one of Mrs. Woolf's most brilliant achievements," said the *SRL*. "I really must see," thought I, "what this Woolf woman is like that I've heard so much about." I bought "The Years."

I believe there are many others who were similarly infected with the Woolf germ. It had finally "taken." Publicity and simple repetition, which have done so much for Listerine and Pepsodent, had created a strong potential demand for Mrs. Woolf's wares. And when the novel appeared, and was praised—click!

Incidentally, my own private Woolf mania has spent itself.

FREDERICK J. ROGERS.

Kalamazoo, Mich.

Hail Columbia

SIR:—In justice to our friends of the motion picture industry I feel that I must correct an error which appeared in Mr. Strunsky's review of Russell M. Arundel's "Everybody's Pixillated" in your issue of June 26. Mr. Strunsky refers to "the modern, or Metro-Goldwyn word . . . 'pixillated'" which "was coined by the movies and made its first public appearance in 'Mr. Deeds Goes to Town.'" I don't know what genius is directly responsible for the creation of this now classic adjective, but it is to Columbia Pictures, not Metro-Goldwyn that the credit belongs for "Mr. Deeds Goes to Town," and it was from Columbia Pictures that Little, Brown obtained permission to use both this word and the word "doodles."

LAETITIA BOLTON,
Little, Brown & Company.

Boston, Mass.

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Riley as a Nature Poet

BY DONALD CULROSS PEATTIE

POETS have always been preoccupied with Nature, but there are two schools of Nature poets, those who find in Nature a reflection of their own moods or a sermon for human betterment, like Wordsworth, and that rarer sort that tries to echo Nature with her own voice. It is a comparatively easy and pleasant thing to talk about one's self; apparently it is harder, as the naturalists already know, to report Nature.

Naturalists are often distressed by a lack of truthfulness in poets. In the work of an American poet who purports to translate from the Chinese, the Nature-wise are astounded to find a Chinese lady likened to a humming-bird, since humming-birds are of an exclusively New World family. True, the beauty of the image (if it really is a beautiful one and not strained) is not destroyed by this inaccuracy, but it suggests that the poet while borrowing from Nature has no real feeling for it. Again, the lover of the American scene finds another sort of untruth in much American poetry, a sort of Europeanization that robs it of all stem and root and makes it a flower pulled off the stalk by the petals. A gifted lyricist of Mississippi writes of a sort of Græco-Oxonian Nature, when he lives in a state where Nature is lush and violent, where the earth is black as all hell, and the bayous are rust-red and the people talk a rich idiom all their own, an idiom that is never allowed to intrude into the chaste stanzas of this poet. American Nature is utterly un-English; it is ungentle, seldom pretty, not encrusted with legend and history. There are no Miltonian meads "with violets and daisies pied," and instead of nightingales we have whip-poor-wills, instead of asps, rattlesnakes and cottonmouths. Where are the poets who speak for American Nature? Not Poe, not one of the classic New England group (all of them preaching anthropomorphic sermons from gentians, dandelions, or a waterfowl). Lanier, on the salt marshes of Georgia, Whitman listening to the thrush, come closer, speaking with prophetic voices—yet still concerned with God and themselves.

RILEY: *from the Sargent portrait.*

There was in the past generation only one arch-poet of American Nature—James Whitcomb Riley. His fame as a versifier, the fostered legend that is supposed to make him the patron saint of American childhood, have helped to rob him of the title he ought to have, the poet of Midwest Nature.

Poets themselves may resent the suggestion that Riley is more than a versifier. Yet what is poetry if it is not the essence of things, the thought-distilled, mood-condensed sweet sap of the tree of life? When a scientist has boiled down Nature to a quintessential, he hands you what he quite inaccurately calls a law. But when a poet does that, he stocks your memory with an unforgettable line that gets more about the subject into less space than prose can ever do. The man who said he was "knee-deep in June" is a Nature poet of the first rank. He expanded it a little, thus:

> "Noon time
> And June time
> Down along the river."

The nine words enclose all June for you, unforgettably. So, quietly, Riley slips into the hand of the reader, without likening anything to something far-fetchedly else, in the syntax of unpremeditated speech, the essence of an hour or a month. He got down the *nostalgia americana* (which foreigners cannot feel) so unobtrusively, so compactly that it is like that other memorable passage from the poem about a path:

> Sly old brambles, plucking me by stealth
> Put berries in my hand.

Well, this sly old bramble of a man, just because he strums the banjo of humor and dialect to the beat of the professional versifier's craft, has never been seriously considered as a great poet, and I am not proposing him as such. But if a great poet must also choose great subjects, then American Nature seems to me just as good as Dover Beach or Stoke Poges graveyard, or the desultory and most unskillful siege of a small city in Asia Minor.

Poems like "There, little girl, don't cry," however sincere and popular, have done the reputation of Riley no lasting good. The truth is that like Burns he wrote in two different languages, and was two different men in them. The dialect poems are, on the whole, the good poems, as Burns's were. Humor keeps them off the rocks of sentimentality. And why should humor, which has long been accepted in the drama as a sparkling vessel for truth and art, reduce a poet to the rank of a minor? For no reason except that about poetry we are in a state of deadly earnestness, or in the doldrums of a decaying gentility. If humorous poets were not still denied their due, Don Marquis would be wearing ermine over his motley.

In the matter of dialect, it is immaterial whether Riley employed the speech that all Hoosiers used, or the colloquial language of Indiana today. There are few Scotchmen who speak the idiom of Burns. It is only essential that the dialect should be the best medium for the subject that could have been chosen. And to my ear, at least, not only does Riley write the way the Midwestern child and farmer still often speak, but in setting style to subject his sense of pitch is nearly absolute. He vies with the grand masters of regional American literature, the Mark Twain of "Huckleberry Finn," the Lowell of the "Biglow Papers," and the Harris of "Uncle Remus."

To one who was born in the Middle West, and has tried to write about its Nature (so scornfully regarded by other sections of the country) Riley's descriptions of birds on a hot summer day is still unsurpassed for that distillation of essence in the local speech which is poetry "come native with the warmth."

> Pee-wees' singin', to express
> My opinion, 's second class,
> Yit you'll hear 'em, more er less;
> Sapsucks, gittin' down to biz,
> Weedin' out the lonesomeness;
> Mr. Bluejay, full o' sass,
> In them baseball clothes o' his,
> Sportin' round the orchard jes'
> Like he owned the premises!

That expresses my opinion of pee-wees, too. Sapsucks is precisely what my Illinois neighbors call the bird I have to set down in my naturalist's records as *Sphyrapicus varius*. And if any poet can do a better delineation of that cheap dandy of a bird, the bluejay, by all means let him seize his pen.

Donald Culross Peattie is the author of "Green Laurels," "An Almanac for Moderns," and a life of Audubon, "Singing in the Wilderness." His latest publication is "A Book of Hours."

Philosophy I

By Franklin P. Adams

THE principles of Horatio Alger, Jr.,
Are likely to roon yer.

The morals of G. A. Henty
Are spurious but plenty.

The author of "Elsie Dinsmore,"
Martha Finley, made my sins more.

To horse I've always done my duty
Ever since I read "Black Beauty."

Alcoholic love left me flat,
Notwithstanding "The Rubiayat."

I lived according to Karl Marx,
And wearied of sleeping in the parks.

I was a sucker for Schopenhauer,
And boy! did I find existence sour!

Coué's tenet I found I curse;
Day by day I got worse and worse.

I studied those books with a mind so free
That now I haven't any sort of philosophy.

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Reporting the Flood

HUNGRY WATERS. By Lowell Thomas. Philadelphia: The John C. Winston Company. 1937. $1.50.

Reviewed by CLARK B. FIRESTONE

AS a piece of reporting this account of the January flood of 1937, evidently done at top speed, is more than good. Necessarily and properly, it is based mainly on the first pages of American newspapers over a period of about three weeks. Unlike the lowlands of the Ohio and Mississippi watersheds, Mr. Thomas is never submerged by what he has to handle. He has seen the deluge as a whole. His sense of drama enables him to withhold the climaxes until they actually arrive, and meanwhile to build up piece by piece the story of valley populations that saw portents of trouble multiply and yet were not greatly concerned until disaster was upon them. The story sounds like a symphony, one stream after another—mainly small streams at the outset—striking their notes of danger in the news, subsiding into momentary silence, speaking again with louder accents, until suddenly the voice of great rivers is heard and the terrifying orchestra of a deluge is going full blast.

Although he misplaces the Muskingum with reference to Zanesville, its largest city, Mr. Thomas knows where his rivers are. Although not good pictorially, the numerous flood photographs add much to his text. He does not give proper value to the fact that in flood the affluents of a great river become bayous, receiving more than they contribute. In his desire to dramatize the notable achievement of City Manager Dykstra, Disaster Administrator of Cincinnati, Mr. Thomas does unwitting injustice to that city, picturing hilltop residents as fearful that mobs would raid their homes, picturing also in imagination the parlous condition of things had the community been under one of the administrations of pre-Charter days. This is just rubbish. Cincinnati had learned what to do and how to comport itself in flood time before Dykstra was born—and also to help its neighbors. Indeed, Dayton doubled its Red Cross quotas during the 1937 flood in avowed and grateful memory of aid rendered it by Cincinnati in the flood of 1913.

Of substantial merit is the author's statement of the problems of flood control, with its conclusion that because these periodic inundations, which seem to mount higher from decade to decade, are the product of a variety of causes, they must be attacked from a number of angles: reforestation, contour plowing, farm dams, creek dams, river dams, protective levees, and the withdrawal from residential zones of chronically flooded river bottoms. He is in error, however—as President Roosevelt was in his Victory Dinner address—in assuming that the dams in the Tennessee Valley did much of anything to curb the January flood. They lowered the crest at Cairo less than three inches, where the opening of the Birds Point spillway just below Cairo lowered it at least three feet. Flood control is mere window-dressing of the Tennessee Valley project; its object is nationalization of water power.

Thus there is a chapter missing in this book: the attempt of the present Administration, hidden under the smooth phrasing of the President's recent flood message but disclosed in the bill to carry it out, to cover the entire land with power plants, operated by "The seven little T V A's," and pass the program off as flood control. It is nothing of the sort. A power dam is one thing, a flood control dam is another. The first is kept full or nearly full of water so as to generate power, and therefore can do little to withhold the surpluses of floods. The second is a dry meadow, protected by a wall, which draws off a flood and feeds it out again when danger has passed. Such are the five dams of the Miami Conservancy District, established after the 1913 flood had taken at least 360 lives. On each is a bronze tablet declaring that power shall never be made there. Had these been power dams last January, the 1913 catastrophe in the Miami valley would have been repeated and perhaps surpassed.

The name of the missing chapter in "Hungry Waters"—which would picture the well-grounded fears of the Ohio valley that the present Administration may sabotage flood control in pursuit of its power hobby—might well be "Clutching Fingers."

Clark B. Firestone, author of "Sycamore Shores," a book on the Ohio River, is on the editorial staff of the Cincinnati Times-Star.

Pictures, Inc.

CINCINNATI'S AMUSEMENT PARK UNDER WATER
From "Hungry Waters."

Ahead of His Time

THE AMAZING FREDERIC. By Gertrude Slaughter. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1937. $3.75.

Reviewed by GARRETT MATTINGLY

HIS contemporaries called him *"stupor mundi."* "Wonder of the World" is weak English for that; even the Latin fails to express the awe and stupefaction of the thirteenth century. The career of Frederic II, Emperor of the Romans, King of Sicily and Apulia, King of Jerusalem still tempts the most cautious writers past superlatives. Perhaps he was the only hereditary monarch of undoubted first rate genius. Surely he was the greatest European ruler between Charlemagne and Napoleon. Most striking of all, he is the only person in the centuries between Boethius and Petrarch to whom we can feel akin without effort, as if a modern man had strayed into the Middle Ages.

From his father, a German emperor, he inherited the dreamy, adventurous Suabian temper, from his mother, queen of Sicily and daughter of its conquerors, the cool Norman head and steady, ruthless hand. The Normans left him their solid kingdom, out of which he built the first modern state, the Hohenstaufens their vaulting, impossible ambitions, which he nearly realized. He was born and reared in southern Italy, a land rich in memories of Greece and Rome, meeting place of Byzantine and Saracen, Norman knight and Provençal troubadour, and of mer-

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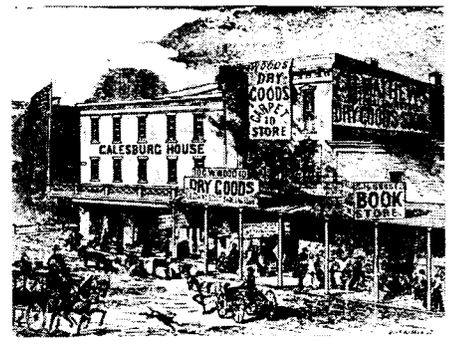
chants and scholars, forerunners of the new Italians, a forcing bed of hybrid cultures. There the strains of North and South, the ancient wisdoms, the new dreams, began to blend into a fresh product; his court sheltered the first Italian poets, the first original sculptor, the first great mathematician. But Frederic, though he was chief of the poets, shook off their preoccupations with his youth, and though he knew Aristotle he was not awed by his authority; his study of birds is almost a modern book of zoölogy, just as his administrative code is, in many ways, a modern book of laws. Always his restless intellect turned from the past to leap at the future; he did not belong to his own time.

That is an unhappy fate. Had Frederic not been born in the purple, he would have been burnt as a sorcerer, or shut up in a monastic prison. As it was, with all the tremendous leverage of his double inheritance, he failed to lift Italy out of the rut of time. Some of the arts he fostered lived to bloom in another century and another place, but the medieval foundations of his power crumbled under the modern structure he was raising; the glory of the empire died with him. He was beaten by the stubborn parochialism of Lombard burghers, by the invincible arrogance of the popes, by the feudal quicksand forever shifting under his feet. But chiefly he was beaten by his own anachronism. He could not conceal from his contemporaries a mind different from theirs, living in a different world into which he was seeking to entice, or bully, or drag them. Naturally, they hated him, and betrayed him when they could. Only from the records of their loathing and distrust, from a few moldy manuscripts, and some dismantled ruins can we learn now of the Wonder of the World.

Frederic has attracted many biographers. There are books about him in French and Italian, many in German and a few in English; of these last, a stout two-volume work seventy-five years old has hitherto been standard. There is also a growing literature of monographs and special articles to which American scholarship has contributed much. The present compact and readable biography makes good use of recent studies. The subject is a vast one, and errors are to be expected. Some arise from inadequate scholarship, but more from Mrs. Slaughter's method and her uncontrolled enthusiasm for her subject. She continually tells us what Frederic was thinking, which is more than anyone can now know; she exaggerates his originality (a difficult feat), and gives him a brighter halo than seems altogether congruous behind his cynical head. Nevertheless, this is an honest and intelligent book, biased, but frankly so, a clear and up-to-date account of one of the most fascinating characters in history.



FROM THE JACKET OF
"THEY BROKE THE PRAIRIE"

The Biography of a Prairie Town

THEY BROKE THE PRAIRIE. By Earnest Elmo Calkins. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1937. $2.50.

Reviewed by Rebecca Lowrie

PERHAPS I am too close to those who broke the prairie and to the prairie they broke to read without some bias Earnest Elmo Calkins's tender but astringent biography of a Midwestern town, his town and my town, Galesburg, Illinois. However I do not think that it is an indication of bias to regard "They Broke the Prairie" as a vivid and valuable piece of Americana. I have, naturally, a keen interest in Mr. Calkins's retelling and interpretation of old stories and in his reanimation of the village fathers, those decorous daguerreotypes who have hung in the memories of my townsfolk for a hundred years, but even greater is my interest in this story of an American town, unique but typical of a social pattern which could have been evolved nowhere but in America and at no time other than the past century. For Galesburg and Knox College were twin-born of the religious and educational zeal of the Reverend George Washington Gale, a Presbyterian minister, whose belief in hell fire, confirmed no doubt by his chronic dyspepsia, led him to gather his company of pioneers in and about Whitesboro, New York, and advance upon the Mississippi Valley, there to found a training college for the ministry.

That the city departed from the original "Circular and Plan" drawn up by its founders was to be expected. That, placed as it was, in land so rich and so generous, it should develop into a business center for a large territory of farming country was natural. That this development should have been coincident with the coming of the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad, the "Q" as we know it, was partly luck and partly the shrewdness of the second generation of these pious New York state farmers.

A vast amount of research has gone into Mr. Calkins's reconstruction of life as it actually went on in the little prairie settlement of 1837, in the groping, stretching, sprawling town of the sixties, the seventies, the eighties, and the result is a storehouse of salty anecdote, of social customs, and of industrial development.

One of the aspects of Galesburg's history which, though purely its own, is also of national interest, is its connection with the underground railway and with Lincoln. Knox College was the scene of the Lincoln-Douglas debate in which the slavery issue was first clearly defined, and descendants of the fugitive slave "Aunt Sukey" still live in the town. Mr. Calkins's chapter on the debate makes a vivid companion-piece for Carl Sandburg's "The Prairie Years"—for the prairie is the same and the people who walk its pages have the same spirit—like their own osage hedges, "horse-high, pig-tight, and bull-strong."

It is interesting to find a book with such a keen sense of the native talk, the phrases of Yankee, Scotsman, Hoosier, New Yorker, coming from a man whose impressions do not come primarily from the ear. And one of the things which give "They Broke the Prairie" its sturdy, homely authenticity is Mr. Calkins's success in making its characters speak, in words as well as in actions.

Thirty Years After

MARRIAGE. By Léon Blum. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co. 1937. $2.50.

WHILE Presidents and Cabinet members are increasingly inclined to rush into print these days, producing books almost as easily and as often as they promulgate new legislative projects, it is difficult to imagine Mr. Roosevelt or Mr. Hull turning out in leisure moments a treatise such as this. For to the unwary reader it may appear that the accomplished gentleman who until two weeks ago was *Président du Conseil* of France has indulged in a polite bit of sexology.

As a matter of fact, however, it is somewhat unfair to associate this early book with the present Léon Blum. It was written in 1907 by a Parisian journalist and dramatic critic of no great fame, and is merely a brief plea for greater sexual freedom before marriage, and greater common sense afterwards. Realizing the extremely precarious happiness of the average married couple, the author urges young people not to marry until they are quite sure they know what they are about. Spiked with many quotations from Balzac, Stendhal, the forgotten Lucien Mühlfeld, and other Gallic experts on *l'amour*, the book is a fairly entertaining and intelligent, and always perfectly decent, treatment of the subject. Originally revived by M. Blum's enemies, it not unnaturally seems a trifle faded today; but some of the variations on the sole theme display the same intellectual keenness shown by the author in debate.

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The Bowling Green by Christopher Morley

Friends of the Library

(*By a Local Speaker*)

Nine hundred members and guests of the Friends of the Library, a lay organization to promote the interests of libraries throughout the country, attended a luncheon in the ballroom of the Waldorf. In a broadcast from London Arundel Esdaile, secretary of the British Museum, expressed appreciation for the gifts of the late John D. Rockefeller to libraries in many countries. . . . Dr. John H. Finley presided and introduced both the London participant and the local speakers.

—*New York Times, June 24*

WE long ago constituted ourself an unofficial supervisor of the good old New York *Times;* we have never scrupled to praise its journalistic efficiency. So now a rousing compliment on its courageous restraint. Only a great paper could be so resolute to conceal the identity of the "local speakers." Obviously it was not in the public interest to let this shameful secret leak out.

So the Bowling Green won't betray it either. But with our newspaper-trained instinct for accuracy we pursued one of the "local speakers" and asked him for the MS. of his palaver. He said there wasn't any, and that anyhow as the conversazione was being broadcast time was limited and he didn't get down to what he most wanted to say. Well, we suggested, write out for the Green a little of what you did say and the gist of what you didn't. He agreed, went home to collect his thoughts, and later handed us the following.

LOCAL SPEAKER:—The enigmatic gaiety of Dr. Finley [editor-in-chief of the N. Y. *Times*] is undoubtedly due to the fact that within a few days there will be one less morning paper in New York City. (*Applause.*)

A word of homage; a word of hope; and—since alliteration is not dead—a word hortatory.

On Michigan Avenue in Chicago, not far from the headquarters of your American Library Association, I always notice scraps of newsprint on the pavement, spinning angrily in the wind. This pathetic flotsam twirls outside the windows of the Chicago Public Library where those austere ladies can be seen at their task of compilation and preservation. I used to suppose that perhaps the Chicago Street Cleaning Department was not up to its job. But no, it is the turbine and hungry instinct of printed matter to swarm and funnel toward a library. This forlorn newsprint is jealous to get in. We know, we practitioners of ink, that the library is our frail affiliation with the future. The librarian is the life guard watching over the heavy surf of Today. O strong swimmer (we cry), O life saver, O life preserver, rescue my little testimony that strangles and struggles in that treacherous undertow. Bring it safe to the shining sands, to the dunes of duration.—Such is the absurdity of the human heart, we don't so much mind dying if someone will some day know that we once were alive.

There are Ten Thousand libraries, public or quasi-public; and Mr. Wyer your retiring president, Mr. Craver your incoming president, Mr. Milam your permanent secretary, are the Xenophons of that army. Dr. Finley remembers how the Ten Thousand, after struggling through Asia Minor among the wild forefathers of Michael Arlen, reached a mountain ridge and saw the sea. They cried *Thalassa*—I hope I have the quantity right: I don't remember if it was Thálassa or Thalássa, but there was also a certain

LIBRARIAN AT ATHOS MONASTERY
Photo by Arnold Genthe.

tentativeness about some of Dr. Finley's pronunciations from the classics. As my old sales manager at Doubleday Page and Co. used to say when he sent us on the road, Be sure to get quantities.—And so I would like to cry Thálassa (or Thalássa) with your Xenophons. The library profession, after struggling through the wilderness, now sees a new horizon—the public recognition of its vast social importance.

I also was born in a library, if by being born you mean not just the physique of parturition but the first stirrings of intellect. I was born about the year 1898 lying on my stomach on a cocoanut matting in the little iron gallery that runs round the North wing of the library at Haverford College. I was reading an author whom only the mature among you will remember, Captain Mayne Reid. It made a lasting impression on me; I mean the cocoanut matting did. I still have a corrugated waffle pattern around what geographers call the Tropic of Cancer. From that day to this some of my greatest excitements have happened in libraries. Not only in great libraries like the Bodleian or the Congressional or the New York Public or (my favorite of all) the Hartford Public Library. That is my favorite because a certain Book Thief specialized in stealing my books from them, and they had to keep on buying new copies. But small libraries too—even Rental Libraries, those alcoves of the hodiernal and hypervendible, which Mrs. Malaprop called an evergreen tree of diabolical knowledge.

Some of you librarians from out of town have been shocked to find in the New York telephone book the entry *The Saturday Review of Literature, A Pub.* To avert any further misunderstanding let me say it is not a pub in the convivial sense; and the nearest bookshop to us is a religious one which faithfully observes the church calendar. I was in there towards Easter time, buying a prayer book. I don't know whether any of this group have noticed it, but a few years ago a number of fine new petitions were put in the Book of Common Prayer, and I wanted to bring my orisons up to date. A lady of sorts came in, looked around, chose *Anthony Adverse,* and after estimating its heft asked how long she could keep it. They said, Why, if you pay three dollars you can keep it forever. Oh, she said, isn't this a library? No, they said, it was a bookshop; and of course she went away at once. When I went out I saw what had caused her misunderstanding. Pasted on the window, in ecclesiastical lettering of lavender color was a sign, LENTEN READING.

A witty bookseller friend of mine, Ben Abramson in Chicago, recently wrote a piece on The Influence of Books on People who Don't Read Them. There is more than mere paradox in the idea. An interesting thesis could be written about the Influence of Libraries On People Who Don't Use Them. Not to be a hypocrite, I am one of those. I am the kind of person who can be at his happiest in a library, but by the irony of chance I am so swamped in reading matter that I rarely have a chance. But I think about libraries a good deal. They are a laboratory for the attempt at solving a great social problem, what I call the Dynamics of Anger. Engineers have learned to take two hostile elements, such as Fire and Water or Electricity and Gasoline—if not hostile, at any rate suspicious of each other and evidently partisan—and by rubbing their noses together under controlled conditions, create from their in-

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dignation beneficent power. (I wish we knew how to do that in Spain, or in steel mills.) In the library we see a similar synthesis working on another pair of dangerous opposites, Action and Thought. In the library do we not observe Allegro and Penseroso struggling for parity; Deliberation getting the upper hand over mere Carcase? Where else, in our noisy age, do you find posted, and heeded, the immortal and healing word SILENCE? The library draws its holy line, divides Action from Thought. The staff are active, the patrons have a chance to think.

We take libraries too much for granted. Suppose librarians were to go on strike? I often wonder why they don't. A sit-down strike, and a chance to read the books themselves. It is only the stone lions in front of libraries that look supercilious. The librarians themselves are very modest people; too much so. Our county seat in Nassau County has the largest jail and the smallest library I have ever seen in a town of its size. I often wonder if this mightn't be an "extreme and mean proportion"—perhaps if the library were bigger we could get along with a smaller jail?

That is my word of hope.

In conclusion: [the Local Speaker would have said, had there been more time] a good many of you will soon be reading a remarkable First Novel, a story called *The Anointed*, by Clyde Davis, a Buffalo newspaper man. (It is to be a Book of the Month in August.) There's a delightful librarian in it, with all the charms of her profession: shell spectacles, and a pencil with rubber stamp on the end of it, and cards that drop into a slot. She is a gay and positive little creature, but be on the lookout, please, for the irony at the end of the story. Sometimes I have just a little fear lest the fascinating mechanics of bibliothecary science, the exemplary efficiencies of cataloguing, accessioning, Dewey-decimalizing, filing, indexing, staff bulletineering, may not a little outrun our intuition of the urgent human need. Some kinds of books, even some kinds of people, thrive best on a little dust and dinginess; I like to think that the most valuable libraries are those where someone, even the librarian himself, can be surprised by finding something he didn't know was there. Remember the old statutes of the Bodleian, which allotted a day every year—chosen in November, when daylight was short—when the doors were locked and the staff should "perlustrate"; go glimmering around to see what they had and whether everything was in order.

Those things you have on your shelves are not just groceries, they are the joy and trouble of actual human beings. In that story *The Anointed* a young sailor in from sea appeals to the librarian for a book that will guide him in his mortal perplexity. She recommends a book by Watson on why people behave, or don't behave, as the case may be. The sailor's conclusion, after attentive reading, is "I don't think this Watson has been around very much." Librarians have got to get around, in a spiritual sense. E. M. Forster said, in one of his acute essays, that Gibbon was great as a historian because he knew how people who are not historians behave. The great librarian must know how people behave who are not bookworms.

I wonder if any graduates of the Library School of the University of Minnesota remember a sentence that was written on their classroom blackboard some years ago? It was a quotation from one of Erasmus's letters. He wrote to his friend Bishop Fisher, *Assiduus sis in bibliotheca, quae tibi Paradisi loco est*—May you be assiduous in your library, which for you is in place of heaven. The damsels of the Minnesota library school even formed themselves into a sorority which they called the Assiduous Sisses.

To that quotation I should like to add one more—a noble line of Hilaire Belloc's in his Life of Milton. He is speaking of the Grace of Literature, and particularly of Poetry, "whereby," he says, "man, the exile of the outer night, got a glimpse of light through a crevice." For many a hungry and groping creature, the public library is that crevice. You librarians, by unselfish and unwearying service, have created a new order, a new voting power in the parliament of civilization. You—far more than that emotional trollop Radio—are the Fifth Estate.

Lines Written on a Birthday Card From One Quakeress to Another

This card it seems was made in Hollywood.
We went there once and came back just as good
As when we went. Does thee remember, dear,
Our fellow guests who sat in groups to hear—
Not scandals of the stars of stage and screen,
Not scantiness of garb or flaunting mien,
Not quick-change artists in the line of spouses,
Nor wild night parties, orgies and carouses;
But gathered round the tables set for tea,
With knitting, tatting or embroidery,
These uncontaminated, gentle folk
Of all their little homely doings spoke.
The most intriguing topic that they treated—
Which here and there among them was repeated—
Borne on the breeze to ears of thee and me,
Was such and such a friend's too high "B.P."
We left them there as we went on our way
To "House of Rothschild's" opening matinée.

A. L. T.

The Pulp Magazines

(*Continued from page 4*)

ladder to climb again when he comes back. It is doubtful whether any such writer imagines he is producing literature; yet there can never be altogether absent the feeling that he is in the antechamber of letters without quite enough talent to enter the lower salon. The only solace is large bundles of delicious money, and the upshot a collection of neuroses that would gladden the heart of a Vienna doctor.

Colonel Dey spent his considerable income traveling from place to place without cease, wrote most of the Nick Carters on trains, and wound up with suicide. Hersey tells of another unnamed who advised him to shoot himself, quite calmly and not in any despairing moment; H. Bedford-Jones seeks release through the mental gymnastic of writing two or three stories at once—paragraph of one, then paragraph of another on separate typewriters—maintaining a fine house in the suburbs of Paris and never speaking English; Henry Leverage did much of his pulp work from a prison cell; A. Merritt lives in seclusion and raises roses for flower shows.

It is rather strange, indeed, how many pulp writers find surcease in endless and rapid travel—or perhaps it is not so strange, for after all, the worst feature of writing for the pulps is the fans, the people who really enjoy this form of opiate, who get out multigraphed magazines of their own to discuss the latest developments, and who every so often hold get-togethers, at which editorial fiat compels all the writers within reach to present themselves, shake hands, and partake of the ham sandwiches and Coca-cola which are the usual collation on such occasions.

This, however, is not all or the worst, even Coca-cola becoming palatable after you get used to it. There is a good deal of mail ("mash notes" in the trade vernacular, regardless of what they say), which must be scrupulously answered, or there will be complaints in the fan sheets and to editorial headquarters with the omnipresent danger of the loss of star rating. Worst of all are the occasional and appalling domiciliary visits. A. Merritt was working in his garden when called on by a fan who had dipped heavily into his fantastic stories of never-never land. "Oh, please don't tell me you're A. Merritt!" begged the caller, with perfectly genuine tears; Mr. Hersey (who then edited a love pulp) tells of his horrible experience with a young lady who arrived from Nebraska with a suitcase full of new underwear and every intention of marrying him on the spot; and another writer was called on by an indignant parent who said his son had constructed a small model of the interplanetary rocket described in one of his stories, blowing three fingers off his hand, and what did the author propose to do about it?

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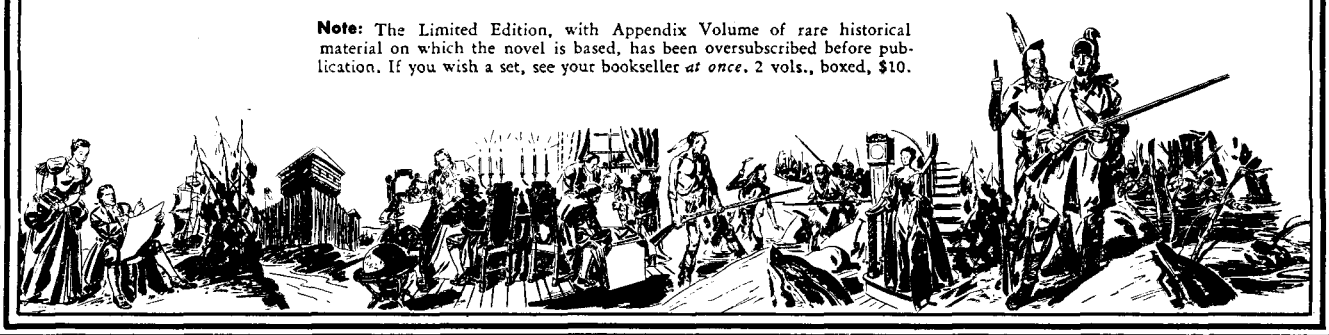

Lord Bothwell

and Mary Queen of Scots

By ROBERT GORE-BROWNE

This book demands attention as the first biography of Bothwell to be written in English. His association with Mary of Scotland, and with the violent and tragic events that followed in the wake of her beauty, remains a fascinating and hotly-argued point. After a long and careful study of the facts, Mr. Gore-Browne reveals the whole authentic story, and tells it with the action and pace of a thrilling novel. Here is a genuinely great book, in the lineage of Strachey's *Victoria*, Guedalla's *Wellington*, Zweig's *Marie Antoinette*.

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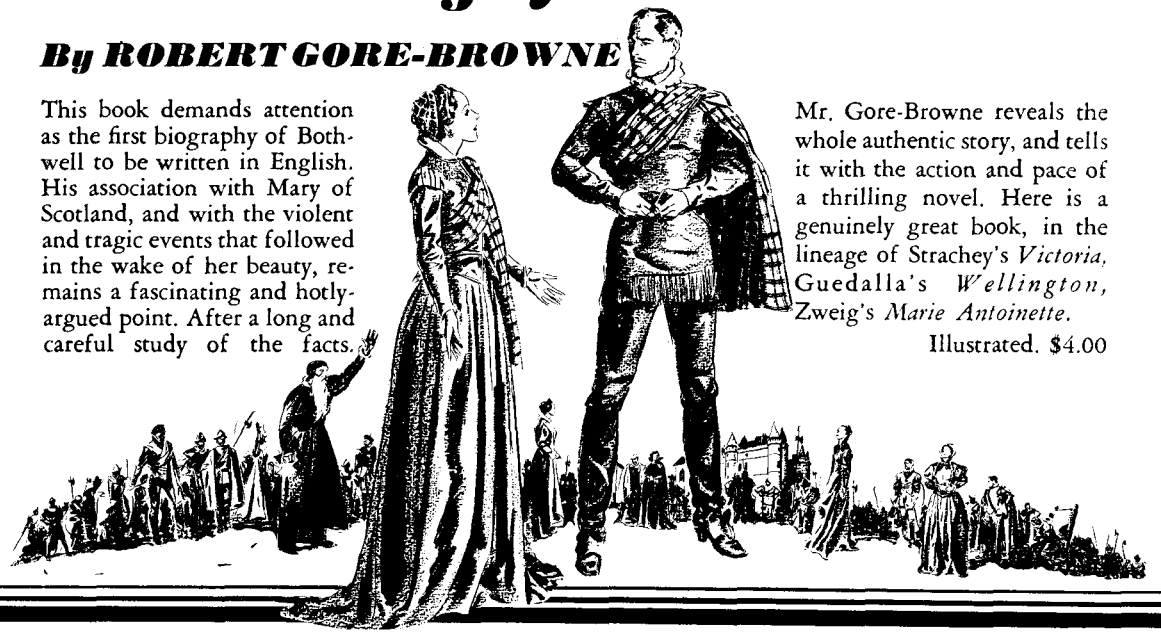

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Both Sides of the Rio Grande

PERILOUS SANCTUARY. By D. J. Hall. New York: The Macmillan Company. 1937. $2.50.

NEW MEXICO'S OWN CHRONICLE: Three Races in the Writings of Four Hundred Years. Adapted and Edited by Maurice Garland Fulton and Paul Horgan. Dallas: Banks Upshaw & Company. 1937. $3.50.

HISTORICAL HERITAGE OF THE LOWER RIO GRANDE. By Florence Johnson Scott. San Antonio, Texas: The Naylor Company. 1937. $3.

Reviewed by Edith Mirrielees

THE three books listed above are tied together by two threads and by two only. One is the thread of geography; all three deal with the Southwest. The other is of history, for all three, though in very different degrees, reintroduce to the reader's imagination the days of Spanish domination along the Rio Grande—days so far back in history that Raleigh was in his cradle and the forefathers of the Pilgrims still placidly telling their beads.

Except for these two connections, the books are far apart in form, purpose, workmanship. "Perilous Sanctuary," the one novel of the three, tells the story of a misfit Englishman — university man, pseudo-communist—who jumps ship in an American port, meaning to make for himself a new life. The new life is promptly complicated by an accidental killing. To escape arrest, he loses himself in the New Mexico desert, is saved from death there by a Spanish-American grandee. Part guest, part prisoner on his host's isolated estate, the refugee spies on the Lenten rites of the Penitentes, makes a little surreptitious love to the wife of the man chosen to represent the Christ in those rites, is warned by that same man of the approach of State troopers, and again escapes into the desert, where, presumably, he dies. The author emphasizes his hero's early conceit and materialism, his gradual awakening to things spiritual, but at neither end of the scale do the notes ring true. The mixture of races and cultures in New Mexico, the clash between fifteenth century minds and twentieth century procedures, offer material enough for drama. What "Perilous Sanctuary" succeeds in extracting from the mixture is melodrama. The account of the Penitentes holds some interest, the descriptions of desert scenery are frequently impressive, but except for the briefest intervals both Englishman and Spanish-American remain wooden throughout the book.

"New Mexico's Own Chronicle," on the other hand, seeks for drama in original documents and finds it in plenty. The purpose of the compilers, as explained in the preface, is "to reveal under a chronological pattern the essential features in the discovery and development of New Mexico." They succeed to admiration. Divided into fourteen sections, each section preceded by a page-length table of its important events, the book covers New Mexico history from legendary times down to the present—and throws in a "Preface to the Future" for good measure.

Contemporary records fill most of the pages. Letters, diaries, official reports, editorials are included. But to call the volume a compilation only is to do it scanty justice. The compilers are authors as well. Each section is preceded and followed by succinct comment. The excerpts which fill the section are tied together by explanation and summary. There has been, too, a deal of excision, some paraphrasing. The result is an anthological triumph, for what emerges is a narrative loosely related indeed, but as informative as it is entertaining. It is the more informative rather than the less, because here and there is included an excerpt which is frankly fiction.

The first section in the anthology, filled with Indian legends, and the last, concerning itself with the present State of New Mexico, are the least interesting, whether to the casual reader or to the historian. Indian legends translated into English escape mawkishness only by the grace of God, a grace not conspicuously manifested within the present volume. And the State of New Mexico, though no less picturesque than the territory, has been far more exploited. Between these two weaker parts, however, lie a dozen of high excellence. The book is admirably illustrated, is supplied with source references and an adequate index. Though obviously planned for general reading, it can hardly fail to be useful as well to the student of Western history.

Florence Johnson Scott, author of "Historical Heritage of the Lower Rio Grande," has already published one book —"Old Rough and Ready on the Rio Grande"—devoted to Texas history. This, her second venture, had its beginning as a piece of historical research at the University of Texas. It was later revised and extended to cover the entire history of white exploration and colonization within the Lower Rio Grande Valley.

The subject is one of enormous interest. Even though the writing is stiff and frequently awkward (the "sin of whichcraft" is particularly in evidence), even though the pages are overloaded with catalogue, that interest makes itself felt. One reason for its doing so is that the study is centered around a river, and water in the Southwest is synonymous with life. Another is that the genuine statesmanship shown by some Spanish colonizers receives here fuller recognition than has been usual in American writing.

"Kaleidoscopic Changes on the Rio Grande," the second and shorter section of the book, sets forth the dilemma of Spanish settlers after the Mexican War. The tangle of land grants which accompanied change of sovereignty and the slow and imperfect solution of that tangle are given, however, only the briefest treatment, though appendices and bibliography will help the student somewhat in his search for further information.

Oriental Loyalties

THE NEW CULTURE IN CHINA. By Lancelot Forster. New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company. 1937. $2.50.

Reviewed by Albert Parry

IN this collection of most interesting essays Professor Forster of the University of Hong Kong seems to come to the conclusion that there is no new culture in China. According to him, the old culture based on the teachings of Mencius and Confucius is gone or going, and nothing sturdy has come in its place. He describes sympathetically the mass education movement; with guarded deference he touches upon the materialistic ideas of Dr. Hu Shih; he is not at all complimentary to the American mixture of "sentiment, idealism, and materialism," being frankly alarmed over its tremendous influence upon the young Chinese. He does not believe that the scientific spirit and entire civilization of the West would or should spread in China as the basis of her new culture, for, says Dr. Forster, China lacks the spiritual foundation upon which our civilization reared its proud structure. China, he tells us, must have an ennobling, unifying religion before she could build lasting universities; "the mistake of the past was the exclusion of scientific thought from China's scheme of education, the danger of the present is the crowding out, and therefore the exclusion, of cultural and ethical studies."

The reviewer shares the author's point that China should have wider loyalties than those of the family. Indeed, the family basis of China's old culture has had a narrowing effect upon her progress. The impact of the West and life's growing complexity are already dealing blows to this ancient sentimental-materialistic usage. Despite the present chaos in China, the state is gradually stepping into the breach to take care of the aged and the infirm. Thus, inevitably, it will be the state (society), not the family, that will claim men's loyalty. Nationalism, patriotism, however belatedly and slowly, do emerge in China. China has the beginnings of a new culture. Mainly borrowed from the West, it is being fused with the old. There is nothing unnatural or deplorable about it, even if loyalties and not worship serve as its basis.

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Manners up to Date

THE NEW ETIQUETTE. By Margery Wilson. New York: Frederick A. Stokes Co. 1937. $3.50.

Reviewed by AGNES ROGERS

THE author of any book on etiquette which is more than a straightforward collection of rules lays himself—herself in this case—wide open. And "The New Book of Etiquette" by Margery Wilson, the author of "Charm" and the head of a highly successful mail-order charm school, is more—oh, vastly more—than a simple codification. Throughout its thirty-nine chapters, which cover just about everything from when to knock at a door to how to behave at a fox hunt, and from jewelry for gentlemen to the precedence of the members of the cabinet, there breathes the voice of inspiration, a clear (well, not too clear) high note calling on us to help ourselves to all that is beautiful and good in life, not forgetting in the process our sacred duty of service to others. Besides all this, we are given little bits of history.

The chapter on Conversation illustrates Miss Wilson's method. Opening with the cave man, it runs rapidly through barbarism with time out for a word on the Greeks and Romans and brings us up smartly in the modern age where we are told that "Our age is demanding communication with the man at the foot of the ladder, lest he drag us down again. This is the age when strong, forceful, simple language is the language of the hour . . . today we must be inclusive—not exclusive—or we are not being smart and modern." A few words on grammar follow, with illustrations of incorrect and correct speech. You can skip this part if you are not in the habit of saying "Them and us had a wonderful time," "Just like he and she," or "There was the both of them, him and her." The suggestions on how to make conversation in the next section are intelligent and intelligible.

From this point on, inspiration begins to seep through. We find this lofty exhortation, "Let your words *clear the vision of every person who contacts you.*" The italics are the author's. I may remark in passing that Miss Wilson, who is pretty severe on the use of slang (although she admits that "the most amusing young people are reviving the word 'swell' "), and seriously explains that "terribly" is derived from "terror" and that only the thoughtless use it in any other sense, does not scruple to use "contact" as a verb. She is now well in her stride and sweeps on to the following remarkable passage:

> Let nothing throw you back into self-conscious silence and inexpressiveness. You are a child of the living God. The stream of awareness flows through your consciousness as the blood flows through your veins. The source of your life is inexhaustible. You can always draw upon your source for ideas, words, inspiration, help of all kinds at all times! You live in a beneficent universe and can have from it practically *anything* if you *approach it constructively.*

Now I'm sorry, I just get embarrassed when the conversation gets like this. It is something I don't understand and, like everybody else, I'm strongly tempted to ridicule what I don't understand. You remember when little Rollo was in Paris and heard people, even the little children, speaking in a language he did not understand, how he laughed long and loud. But there are thousands upon thousands of people who do understand, or at least vibrate to, this kind of talk, and if it helps them to have a better life—why, more power to them—and to Miss Wilson.

However, I take issue with Miss Wilson on two statements which I do understand and heartily disagree with. She writes, "The most generally successful party of the present day is the Cocktail-Tea. What hostess does not feel smug when she sees all those people to whom she owes some attention having such a perfectly splendid time for so little effort and expense!" Granted that social debts are to some people debts of honor, and that a cocktail party is a practical way of discharging these debts without undue financial strain, the smug hostess here described presents as pretty a travesty of hospitality as one could wish.

My other quarrel with Miss Wilson is on the ground of the bad manners implied in her suggestion for entertaining sophisticated city friends in the country —"Then there are often barn-storming troupes passing through country places. If their shows are bad enough, they are good entertainment. Guests may be punished in some amusing way for laughing at the wrong time." I know of no blacker offense against the principle of *noblesse oblige* than this particular form of having fun at the expense of people whom you regard as your inferiors—the more pitiable their failure, the more fun for you. My own notion of the amusing way to punish the offending guests who laugh at the wrong time would be to make them apologize personally and individually to the members of the barn-storming troupe.

SOLUTION OF LAST WEEK'S DOUBLE-CROSTIC (No. 170)

EUGENE FIELD—
"SHARPS AND FLATS."

Doubtless there are few of us that have not heard of the man who, having obtained a prescription for insomnia, administered it to his teething baby and enjoyed an unbroken night's rest. . . . Teasing is the malice of good men.

WALTER DURANTY

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The PHŒNIX NEST

CONTEMPORARY POETRY: BY WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT

THIS is written from the Coast where I have recently heard discussion of a young poet, *Willard Maas*, who had a volume published by The Alcestis Press not so long ago, and have also listened to some poems of *Matthew Arnold's* beautifully read. I have been reading *Philip Horton's* illuminating biography of *Hart Crane* and *Rudolph Gilbert's* analysis of the poetry of *Robinson Jeffers* in "Shine, Perishing Republic," which I mentioned last time in this department. Crane's own words on what he called "the dynamics of metaphor" particularly interested me, and this remark by Gilbert has seemed cogent—not that it is precisely new:

> the poet himself seldom understands his own motives; they are concealed in the plausible consciousness, since poets work intuitively, usually knowing nothing of pure reason.

Three new books of poetry that I have had along are "Poems 1929-1936," by *Dudley Fitts* (New Directions: Norfolk, Conn. $2), "Poems" by *C. F. MacIntyre* (Macmillan: $1.25), and "Ornament of Honour," by *E. H. R. Altounyan* (Macmillan-Cambridge University Press: $2.75). It seems to me that they rank inversely as to price; that is, MacIntyre is an unusually interesting new poet, with original concepts and an original use of metaphor; Fitts is highly intellectual, wayward, and quite difficult; and Altounyan's celebration of T. E. Lawrence, though its intention is admirable, seems definitely amateurish. Of the three poets, we know least biographically of MacIntyre, in fact from his publishers exactly nothing. But I am sure he will be heard from further. Certain of his admirations among established poets are indicated by the fact that he has inscribed poems to *MacLeish* and *Frost*, and other poems are dedicated to the late *Harriet Monroe*, to *Rockwell Kent*, and to *William Yandell Elliott*.

At the start of his book Mr. MacIntyre quotes from Eliot's "Prufrock" and "Preludes." But whatever he has drawn from Eliot he has assimilated fully. He uses assonance, dissonance, and suspended rhyme. His monosyllables occasionally jam his lines, and he would rather seek the exact words he needs, than trouble too greatly over the sound of them. It was Tennyson who worried over the frequent "s" sounds that blemish English verse. He called the process, I think, "getting the geese out of a line." This does not bother Mr. MacIntyre particularly, nor does such a collocation of "sh" and "ch" as "Rash chary goddess!" Also he telescopes certain lines in a way that Browning had. I quote from the same place:

Rash chary goddess! Fiat bade horns burst
from brows where animal just now was burned.

In other words, Actæon is turning into a stag; but the description is not poetry. Neither were some of Browning's descriptions. Browning triumphed, in his own idiom, by rushing like a mountain torrent over all such impediments. But he also initiated the intimately casual, almost colloquial, manner of approaching a subject of whatever import, that Mr. MacIntyre develops in his own way. The more modern poet, however, resorts to assonance and suspended rhyme where Browning would have tried for an exact rhyme, however twisted and tortured. Thus, in "Bright American Youth," Mr. MacIntyre begins:

What you are looking for is not in the books.
Your teachers, pompous androgynes, gentle gossips,
erect mirages of pleonastic blocks,
while the business interests multiply the warships.

To my mind the above illustrates Mr. MacIntyre's chief virtues and faults. In the first place he is saying something true and valuable concerning our own time, and he is searching for the exact words in which to say it, without "benefit of poesy." On the other hand, his language is—as the slang has it—"a mouthful." He is also, however, humorous (in the deepest sense) often pithy, can subtly and sympathetically analyze the human and meditate on the natural. His treatment of the characters of classic myth is an original treatment and entirely modern. Though this book be not unusual in the sum of what it says, it marks a poet well equipped with language, and a definite personality that may yet set its seal on something significant.

Mr. Dudley Fitts has a subtle mind, sensitivity to beauty, an esoteric sense of humor ("A Janissary on a Jaguary: Pure Poetry"), and a most elliptical manner. He is already known as a translator of the "Alcestis," and another of his translations from the Greek will be forthcoming this fall. He has contributed poetry to the most advanced reviews. "The Liturgy of Small Susan" (even though Eliot fished the murex up) is saliently original. Some of the other poems are, to me, in Mr. Fitts's own phrase "calico sphynxes for a saturday masque," but some are distinctly moving, even though cryptic. "Sleepy Driving" and "This Country Road with the Engine Running" are evidence of this. "The Bust in the Vestibule" teases me out of thought, but I admit its interestingness. I quote this ending from "Preraphaelite Encounter with Your Grandfather," which I have found quite impressive:

Twice your eyes
Looked Goodbye to me, Goodbye to his loneliness
(who heard again,
As long since, the guns of Shiloh, the stillicide of dead rain
After the Wilderness, the long silences of the slain).

Mr. Fitts seems to me, more than most, to possess authentically the kind of mind and temper that have contributed to the achievement of T. S. Eliot. Yet I cannot help feeling also the danger of a "dead end" in such poetry. Eliot's earlier work still possesses a vitality that the aftercomers rarely achieve. One can really do no better with the poetry of erudite implications than "Burbank with a Baedeker: Bleistein with a Cigar" or "Sweeney among the Nightingales." I admire the deftness of Mr. Fitts, but he does not recapture that first fine careless robustness. This is not meant to imply that he has not his own originality. That is evident even in "Seven Clinical Orations." It amuses him in this trivia (even as it amuses E. E. Cummings) to make such a remark as "Suddenly, bejaysus, I seen Heaven delighting them cold rooks." But if you admire intensely the poem by Yeats to which this Joycean twist is given, Mr. Fitts seems rather in error—and the jest falls flat. Why do some of our keenest minds content themselves with such kindergarten play? "Tell me I love you" is the best twist in any of the Orations—and clever enough. But we had an idea we were going to get poetry!

They say that *T. E. Lawrence's* letters, to be published, will show the friendship between him and E. H. R. Altounyan. Lawrence encouraged this poet. It is a fair guess, also, that Lawrence was not particularly conversant with the development of poetry in the twentieth century. The author is a surgeon, and this poetic tribute is obviously a labor of love. Its language is undistinguished. Far better read *Selden Rodman's* distinguished poem on Lawrence. Even though Mr. Altounyan knew the living man and Mr. Rodman did not, the latter as an artist, it seems to me, has given by far the more deeply-graven portrait.

Into the Unknown

THE BETTY BOOK. By Stewart Edward White. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. 1937. $2.50.

Reviewed by JOHN HAYNES HOLMES

It is wonderful exploration, a whole new country. The trails are dim. Perhaps sometimes we must back track. But they seem to be leading somewhere pretty definite.

"THE BETTY BOOK" is the record of this "exploration" of "a whole new country." Stewart Edward White is an old hand at explorations, but in this case his journey was into no earthly region but "the world of other-consciousness." Under the guidance of a companion not otherwise described than as "a young woman nick-named Betty," he took his first steps in 1919 into the so-called psychic or spiritual realm, and has been adventuring there ever since. The pages of the book are transcriptions and interpretations of his notes on what he has seen or heard reported.

As the latest addition to the vast literature of psychical research this work has familiar features, but is none the less unique. Mr. White believes, though he

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does not impose his belief on his readers, that Betty has led him into what is commonly known as "the next world." He is convinced that she has communicated with discarnate intelligences. But Betty is no ordinary medium, and her purposes are far removed from those usually sought in this field. Thus, her work is not that of mere unconscious surrender to disembodied influences, but on her side an "intelligent coöperation" which involves active participation in her quest. Though she "went somewhere else," as Mr. White puts it, "her consciousness was not taken from her in the customary deep trance." She was not "put out," or "drugged," or "put asleep," but in her own consciousness "transferred." By this process she was educated, or "expanded," into an ever more sensitive condition of awareness which has made her at last the active agent of communication with and transmission from the Invisibles with whom she joins contact.

In the same way her purposes from the beginning differed from those of the ordinary medium. Betty's quest was, and is, not to discover the next world, but to uncover that fundamental spiritual reality of existence which prevails not merely in the next world, but also in this world, and in all worlds. We must not wait for the life of pure spirit in the so-called beyond, but enter upon it now. We may "begin life there while still living here," for the two lives are not separate but "overlap," and thus are one. So Betty's revelations, if we may call them such, are a disclosure of spiritual truth. They deal not with psychic powers nor communications, but with a program of human living. From this standpoint, the Book is not psychical literature at all, but rather a religious manual for the right discipline of the soul. It has sublime pages, full of profound insights and mystic illuminations. Its climax is the terrible affirmation that, whether we will or no, we are all the time building our spiritual destiny for good or ill.

What does all this mean? Have discarnate intelligences spoken through Betty to Stewart Edward White? Mr. White thinks so, but does not insist. He agrees that these spiritual teachings may originate in Betty herself; or she may be tapping some "universal mind"; or coming into touch with "race consciousness," the accumulated experiences of mankind. "Anybody is free and welcome," says the author, "to adopt any hypothesis that appeals." But *here is the record of what has happened!* In studying and reviewing this record, I can only state that I find an honest report, of first-hand and unquestionably genuine experience, had by sincere and intelligent persons moved not by emotional excitement but by sober scientific interest, embodying a system of spiritual truth as sane as it is sublime. In the face of this testimony, I find myself indifferent for the moment to questions of natural or supernatural origin. The important thing is to recognize the reality of what is here set down. The cause, if it is important at all, will appear in due course.

John Haynes Holmes is pastor of the Community Church of New York and the author of many books on religion and related topics.

The A. L. A. Convention

THE American Library Association, in convention in New York City during the past week, brought its fifty-ninth conference to a close on Saturday with an election of officers for the ensuing year which placed in the presidency Harrison Warwick Craver, for many years director of the Engineering Societies Library, and in the vice-presidency Dr. Milton J. Ferguson, Chief Librarian of the Brooklyn Public Library. Robert S. Hirshberg of the School of Library Science of Western University was chosen second vice-president, and Matthew S. Dudgeon of the Public Library of Milwaukee treasurer.

The elections followed the most successful and largely attended gathering in the history of the Association. The thousands of members from all over the country, assembled at the Waldorf-Astoria, conducted a series of round table conferences in addition to open meetings, offered consultation services, and maintained what was virtually a laboratory exhibit in the books displayed by various publishers and the demonstrations of new developments in library equipment, bookbinding, stamping and bookmending, photographic and microphotographic apparatus, etc. Discussion during the sessions ranged freely, covering such subjects as the fitness of library staff members for high grade public service, coöperation between the library and the radio, extension of rural library service, what business men do in seeking information, the library and the prison, potential applications of microphotography to the reproduction of music, the advantage of fewer and better books, and the choice of books for boys and girls.

One of the outstanding events of the session was the presentation of the John Newbery medal, offered annually by Frederic G. Melcher for the most distinguished children's book of the past year, to Ruth Sawyer for her "Roller Skates," (Viking Press). Perhaps the liveliest of the numerous social functions was the large luncheon of the "Friends of the Library" at which Dr. John H. Finley, editor of the New York *Times*, acting as toastmaster, and Christopher Morley, one of the speakers of the occasion, good-naturedly twitted each other on their shortcomings in the classics, and Miss Maria Leavitt of the New York Public Library, chairman of the function, called forth a round of applause by her confession that she the less bemoaned her own lacks in Greek and Latin since they established her in the goodly company of the Bard of Avon. Following her speech the guests sat respectfully silent through the five minutes in which an agreeably pitched voice spoke words entirely incomprehensible ascribed by the radio announcer to the librarian of the British Museum speaking from London.

Notable also among addresses of the conference was that of Charles W. Ferguson, associate editor of the *Reader's Digest*, who struck a note of optimism in his statement that "Good reading has become good box office, and that . . . gives us genuine cause for feeling that man's social progress may catch up with his inventive genius, and that civilization may still win the race between education and catastrophe." Carl Van Doren, at the same meeting, likewise stressed the relation of books to social progress, asserting that "interchange of the novels of different countries is another civilizing mission of the library." On the other hand, Alvin Johnson, director of the New School for Social Research, on a later occasion sang the praises of self-forgetful reading, of that absorption in books which blots out the world and time from the reader's consciousness. It was such good books that he bade the librarians recommend to their public. With Dr. Johnson's address the final session of the Conference came to a close.

The Criminal Record

The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

Title and Author	*Crime, Place, Sleuth*	*Summing Up*	*Verdict*
Q 39 *Michael Banner* (Knopf: $2.)	Theft of experimental planes from various European govts. keeps secret agents and auto-racer Lumsden in endless dither.	Excellent international spy stuff with colorful near-Eastern background, speed, plentiful thrills, and hair-raising finish.	Spine tickler
DEATH'S MANIKINS *Max Afford* (Appleton-Century: $2.)	Doll facsimiles of unpleasant English family forecast several violent deaths and worry Sleuth Blackburn.	Good and grisly up to a point, but then some stupid writing gives the whole thing away and interest wanes.	Misfire
THE WRONG BODY *V. A. Van Sickle* (Knopf: $2.)	Daring doctor resurrects gassed corpse of gangster and governor—but their "souls" get mixed and hell starts to pop.	Fantastic, feverishly emotional, garishly garnished with pseudo-science, political dog-fights, etc., and, by and large, a little silly.	Pooh!

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The New Books

Belles Lettres

A NEW VARIORUM EDITION OF SHAKESPEARE. HENRY THE FOURTH: PART I. Edited by Samuel Burdett Hemingway. Lippincott. $7.50.

This edition of Shakespeare, so long associated with the names of Dr. Furness and his son, is now being continued by various scholars under the auspices of the Modern Language Association of America. The present volume is a very welcome addition to the series. There is clear evidence that this play was highly popular on the Elizabethan stage, as well as with the court and the reading public, and today it remains the most delightful of the chronicle histories, with Falstaff untouched by the shadows that gather in Part II, and a vivid and absorbing political action. Professor Hemingway had the benefit of preliminary work done under the direction of Dr. H. H. Furness, Jr., but, as the title-page suggests, the credit for the edition is mainly his own.

The general plan, typography, and binding of the earlier volumes have been followed here. The text is based on the First Quarto, with the archaisms of the type reproduced. The play raises few vexing textual problems, and the sources and approximate date of composition are clear. Professor Hemingway's notes contain variant readings from editions down to the late nineteenth century. The commentaries have been wisely selected, not only as explanations of the text, but as reflections of changing fashions in criticism.

It may surprise American readers to learn that Professor Odell, to quote the editor's words, "records [in his 'Annals of the New York Stage'] almost one hundred productions of 'I Henry IV' in New York City between 1761 and 1864." The most important of those productions are noted here. The full account of presentations of the play in England, and the selected criticisms of leading British actors, from Betterton to Beerbohm Tree, add much to the interest of the book.

W. W. L.

THE LETTERS OF WILLIAM AND DOROTHY WORDSWORTH. THE MIDDLE YEARS. Arranged and edited by Ernest de Selincourt. Volume I, 1806-June, 1811; Volume II, August, 1811-1820. Oxford University Press. 1937. $14.

In 1935 Professor de Selincourt published the letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth written between 1787 and 1805 inclusive. This was a literary event of great importance. Many of the letters had not previously been printed and many others had appeared only in abbreviated or even mutilated form. His editing was as nearly perfect as possible, and he had had access to much material never before available. Now to this volume he has added two more, edited with the same accuracy, and beautifully printed. At this rate, only two more volumes may be expected, for Dorothy's letters will cease almost entirely about 1830, because of her ill health. Thus far, hers have been as numerous as her brother's and much more interesting. She makes no pretense to learning, though she had plenty of it, nor to wisdom, though a wiser woman never lived, nor to literary style, though for naturalness, vivacity, and vividness her writing is unexcelled.

Partly because the group of persons about whom and to whom this correspondence was written included some of the most notable literary figures in England and Scotland and many distinguished in other ways, but chiefly because of Dorothy's gift of direct and sympathetic description, readers are sure to find themselves as much interested in small household details and humorous incidents and personal hopes and fears as if all these were affairs of state. The present instalment of her letters and of William's throws light on several important points in biography. For example, it becomes as clear as daylight that the Wordsworths never turned a cold shoulder on Coleridge. On the contrary they gave him boundless hospitality, sympathy, and loving kindness. The supposed quarrel never took place. It was an invention of his sick imagination. Anxiety about him is a recurring theme in the letters. Another point is Wordsworth's heroic industry, for we see him working in circumstances almost comically unfavorable to literary composition, in cold, smoke-filled little rooms, with his children romping round him.

Another thing that becomes clear is the soundness of the traditional view that after 1807 Wordsworth's political views changed rapidly, and with them his moral character and his literary style—whether for better of for worse being a question much discussed in recent biography. Another valuable feature of these volumes is the correspondence, here for the first time published in full, in regard to visiting the Vallons and Beaudoins in Paris. One finishes the 900 pages exclaiming, "What good company! What an education in good feeling, principles, and conduct, to read these letters and thus live with these people!"

G. M. H.

Biography

RODIN: IMMORTAL PEASANT. By Anne Leslie. Prentice-Hall. 1937. $3.

The merit of the present biography lies in the author's lively recreation of the Norman titan who hewed his way through life as relentlessly as through his marble. Auguste Rodin, like Anatole France, makes good copy: his trenchant personality is typically French and in his conduct of life he allowed himself the license of genius. A determined creator of what was, at the time, courageously unconventional sculpture, Rodin was temperamentally a mean, vain, selfish man, and Miss Leslie makes no attempt to condone his conduct towards his only son.

Rodin's fifty-year-long liaison with Rose Beuret, the illiterate peasant who bore his child, nursed his father in his blind old age, and, in the face of starvation, never forgot to care for the precious casts, is remarkable even in the annals of art. Miss Leslie maintains that Rodin, in his way, loved Rose but it is doubtful if the man whose motto was "work and forget" was capable of caring for anything other than his creatures of clay. But it is safe to assume that Rodin thought he loved Rose since, while a procession of mistress-models succeeded each other in the studios at Meudon and the Hotel Biron, she remained snubbed, slighted, and used, until in the end death made Rodin aware of his need of her.

Miss Leslie's account, since it is concerned with the man rather than his works, cannot take the place of the earlier French studies. Miss Leslie attempts neither an analysis nor an estimate of Rodin's sculpture nor of his position in modern art, and such critical comment as is let fall is of an undiscriminating orthodoxy. The biographical material is well organized, and there are amusing thumbnail sketches of the artist's many admirers, but the anecdotes, many of which will be familiar to readers of the Mmes. Duncan and Nijinsky and the late Lou Tellegen, have rather lost their edge. One suspects that when Rodin dined with Isadora, Loie Fuller, and M. France on the Quai de Boulogne the gentlemen of the party swapped smarter stories than any which Miss Leslie ventures to relate.

V. N.

Fiction

THE UNHOLY CITY. By Charles G. Finney. Vanguard. 1937. $2.

Mr. Finney's "Circus of Dr. Lao" not only achieved the booksellers' award for being last year's most original book, but it also placed its writer out of harm's way in that enviable class known as "unclassifiable." This time he's not going to get away. If "Candide" was a satire, so is "The Unholy City," and Mr. Finney is a satirist until he proves his innocence. He has written a brief, gay, hard-hitting sketch of a city he calls Heilar-wey. It looks like New York, and its main street, Calle Grande, needs no further translation. Here we behold in action those two characters that have enlivened every such satire since the first was written: the outsider, the Man from Mars, who drops in this case most appropriately out of the skies; and the native, the guide and companion who may serve as interpreter of the mysteries. This second is a remarkable character, named Vicq Ruiz (we meet him, actually, in the process of painting the lily, crying out, "Sir, they claimed it couldn't be done!"), a vociferous orator, a smooth-tongued fabricator, an opportunist prating of honor, and at the same time possessed of ingratiating warmth and friendliness—in short, the creature of the big city. It is he who conducts the fallen aviator upon his search, always that same search, for peace and beauty.

Scamper might perhaps be a better word than search. If you are a fascinated reader of Monday's lists of auto crashes, if you haunt those local courts where justice is meagerly served between thick slices of May-it-please-the-Court and Objection-sustained, if you study the peculiar furies of an election, of those

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panting, blood-thirsty blocs that fight for a pension or a bonus or a dole, if you follow the prize fights and the puzzle contests, and if you hasten from the cinema palaces to the grimly hilarious little bars, then you have some of the basic material that went into Mr. Finney's book. He has sharpened it for laughter, and stepped up its speed for excitement. Of course these are a highly selective set of phenomena, incomplete and capable of misleading the literal mind. Yet satire must be permitted the privilege of some distortion, since it often makes its best points that way. This might be a good book to place in a corner-stone, against that less lively century when Heilar-wey will be dust. But Mr. Finney must remove the pun on page nine; it would be a libel against the wit even of Calle Grande.

N. L. R.

VICTORIA 4:30. By Cecil Roberts. Macmillan. 1937. $2.50.

Mr. Roberts uses one of the most convenient of current fiction formulas in his new book. On a train leaving London, he groups a miscellany of people ranging from a Soho waiter and a nun to a film star and a little boy who happens to have become a King that morning. They are all on their way to the Continent and the Arlberg-Orient Express. The "Train de Luxe" trick, while overdone by the popular novelists of late, has not entirely lost its effectiveness, and somewhere in the list of thirteen small dramas offered by Mr. Roberts almost everyone will find facile entertainment of a sort. The types are varied and well if superficially characterized; the local color is filled in by an obviously seasoned hand. The whole is relentlessly British, of course, whether the author is dealing with Levantines and Austrians or the denizens of Chelsea and Belgravia. Yet the total effect is undeniably pleasing. Only the episode of the newly-wed Blakes is really dull, and that of Dr. Wyfold's nephew Reggie somewhat enigmatic in its implications. The author makes little attempt to interrelate his dramas; most of the action, in fact, takes place off the train and is told in retrospect. Progress through the story gives the reader only a hasty and casual view of these people, revealing them much as the rapid trip on such a train reveals Europe to the traveler. But both book and express are easy to take.

T. P., JR.

THE COCK'S FUNERAL. By Ben Field. International Publishers. 1937. $1.75.

Under this title thirteen short stories, many of them published in *The Partizan Review*, where they attracted much attention, have been brought together in book form. They record with fidelity and deep understanding the lives, the major tragedies and minor joys, of American farm laborers, their women and children. A label as substitute for thought will classify them as proletarian literature, since they deal sympathetically with human substrata. But they need no label; they are all interesting tales, verisimilitudes written with an art as stripped and bare of ornament as the lives underneath its scrutiny, worth the reading in themselves.

The tender-minded will very possibly be offended, because the world displayed is very far from the best of all possible places of existence. For these of whom Mr. Field writes are the triply submerged, by mentality, environment, and the pressures from above, which they have but scant power to withstand.

It is hard to choose special tales for comment. The title story, "The Cock's Funeral," is a deeply moving account of the conflict of interests and personalities, the natural human desire for recreation in an otherwise dull life crossing economic needs, a truly tragic situation often found. One would like to see "The Lesson" printed on cards, and made obligatory reading for all who call themselves relief workers! Three close-clipped, poignant tragedies of children, "Danbury Fair," "Johnny Gets A Curve," and "We Will Remember" go to the roots of life as only the literary artist and never the "case-history" can do. Some might label all three Freudian; in their implications they are universal, the common-human complexes of the defeated.

C. E. MACG.

NIGHT BETWEEN THE RIVERS. By R. L. Duffus. Macmillan. 1937. $2.50.

Firmly anchored to a strict sixteen-hour timetable and laid in a single East Side apartment, Mr. Duffus's novel observes the classic unities, though not without calling upon the radio and telephone at times to act as modern equivalents of the Greek chorus. The unfortunate heroine chances to give a cocktail party on a day when a general strike, followed by rioting and martial law, breaks out in New York City. For some of Myvanwy Wynne's guests the consequences are no more serious than a walk home through the idle subway tunnels, but others are arrested, and one, who has meanwhile become her lover, goes out to die in the street fighting, a somewhat far-fetched sacrifice to the spirit of the times.

If all this has a slightly improbable sound, there are nevertheless ample possibilities in the theme. The compact scheme which Mr. Duffus has arranged for his book might well have afforded us an exciting worm's eye view of what the Revolution reserves for innocent bystanders living in the vicinity of Red, or Union Square. But it is hard to understand the author's curious neglect of the more dramatic implications of his plot. Some of his people lapse at once into dialectics, others treat the looming crisis with astonishing flippancy. If this is satire, surely it is overdone, and in any case it tends to make the book as a whole seem unreal and distracting, rather than timely and thought-provoking, as it should be. The romantic-liberal hero and heroine stand, no doubt, for the many who will be caught between the millstones of fascism and communism when the Revolution comes, but their weakness is no more attractive than the unnatural one-sidedness of their friends, several of whom seem embodied political or economic principles. As a sociological fable pointing a rather doubtful moral Mr. Duffus's book may have value, and the writing is excellent when the author does not try to be too humorous or too romantic, but as fiction it is singularly unlifelike.

T. P., JR.

Miscellaneous

TECHNOLOGY, CORPORATIONS AND THE GENERAL WELFARE. By Henry A. Wallace. University of North Carolina Press. 1937. $1.

This little book by the Secretary of Agriculture has three major points to make, all of them reasonably familiar to the American public after five years of the New Deal. The first point is that rapid technological advance, intensive improvement in what Veblen called "the industrial arts," makes serious industrial and agricultural dislocations inevitable as people in various areas are thrown out of work from time to time by the encroaching machine. The second point is that corporations, getting bigger and more powerful, exercise a collusive artificial control over the price level, which suspends to some extent the law of supply and demand and so robs the customer of the benefits of cheapness. The third point is the conclusion drawn from contemplation of the two preceding points: that government, in the interests of the "general welfare," must care for those who are dislodged by the machine and must also step in to prevent the gouging of the consumer. These points have all been made before, and with more finality and sharpness, notably in Secretary Wallace's own "New Frontiers." What "Technology, Corporations and the General Welfare" does is to reduce the work of Veblen, Berle and Means, and others, to easy, conversational style. The book, which is one of the Weil Lectures on American Citizenship, is to be recommended to those who must run as they read.

J. C.

PETER KALM'S TRAVELS IN NORTH AMERICA. Revised and Edited by Adolph B. Benson. New York: Wilson-Erickson, Inc. 1937.

The first appearance in the United States of this extremely valuable description of eighteenth century America must be welcomed by every historian, especially as this revision of the English version of 1770 contains new material from Kalm's diary notes. Peter Kalm was a Swedish scientist flourishing at a period when Sweden, having given up militarism, was endeavoring to build up her industry and agriculture. He was sent over in 1748, primarily to bring back such plants and seeds as might be useful for Sweden. A good naturalist for his day, he was also intensely curious in all human activities and hence his journal (in which Thoreau delighted) not only is a full record of animals, plants, and minerals but also a mine of observations and social customs and a detailed description of the appearance of the country—farms, woods, houses—through which he traveled. He went as far as the French settlements in Canada, was the first to describe Niagara in English, and from first-hand observation inspected the Hudson River country, but was most at home and most informative in the Delaware River region, so much of which had once been Swedish, and where many old Swedes still remained. Benjamin Franklin was his friend, but while he used extensively the library and resources

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of Philadelphia, the really invaluable part of his account comes from stories and descriptions which old settlers of his own race gave to him. One learns here how the farmer lived in the mid-eighteenth century, what weeds troubled him, what he learned from the Indians, how he got through the winter, what he ate, and how he managed his economy. Novelists particularly who propose to write of eighteenth century life in America are recommended to these volumes, for they will find there those indispensable small detail which chroniclers usually omit.

H. S. C.

YOGA, A SCIENTIFIC EVALUATION. By Kovoor T. Behanan. Macmillan. 1937. $2.50.

Yoga is commonly associated with groups of women entranced by swamis talking hysterical nonsense. Yoga is in fact, as this book goes a long way to show, a philosophy as sophisticated as any of the Western world's (indeed it is often their prototype) and a way of life tested by centuries of growth and application. As to the former, it is worth noting that "more words for philosophical and religious thought are to be found in Indian literature than in the Greek, Latin, and German languages combined." As to the latter, the reader will of course make up his own mind. Dr. Behanan, as a native of India and a Sterling Fellow in psychology at Yale, stands in the unique and happy position of bridging Eastern and Western cultures; and his exposition in consequence may help to remove the irrational lack of attention to things outside our culture endemic to our world of science.

J. R.

WAR IN SPAIN. By F. White. Longmans, Green. 1937. $1.

This booklet can serve a useful purpose only for those who have not followed the day-by-day newspaper accounts of events in Spain since the beginning of the civil war. The author makes no pretense to any special knowledge of Spain and contributes nothing new to our understanding or knowledge of the background and development of the war. His survey covers not only the fighting, but also the efforts of France and Britain to keep the struggle localized in the face of great odds. While written in a dry, matter-of-fact style, it has the great saving virtues of being quite objective and substantially accurate.

J. C. DEW.

Poetry

THE POEMS OF MARIA LOWELL WITH UNPUBLISHED LETTERS AND A BIOGRAPHY. By Hope Jillson Vernon. Introduction by S. Foster Damon. Providence: Brown University.

Maria Lowell's poems have been accessible hitherto only in a few selections in anthologies, and in two limited editions. Her merits as a poet have been obscured by the greater celebrity of her husband, James Russell Lowell, and too often she has been thought of simply as one of the persons who influenced him. But she was a poet in her own right. Her technique was limited, and she was easily misled by the cliché and the sentimental commonplace, but at her best she spoke out, however simply, with the intensity of genuine emotion.

The present edition is a tardy recognition of her deserts. It includes not only such verses as have been previously printed in book form, but also others from periodicals and a few from manuscripts. Miss Vernon's biography is painstakingly detailed, and, together with the letters, gives a pleasant if unexciting picture of Maria Lowell's short life.

K. B. M.

PERSONALS

ADVERTISEMENTS will be accepted in this column for things wanted or unwanted; personal services to let or required; literary or publishing offers not easily classified elsewhere; miscellaneous items appealing to a select and intelligent clientèle; exchange and barter of literary property or literary services; jobs wanted, houses or camps for rent, tutoring, travelling companions, ideas for sale; communications of a decorous nature; expressions of opinion (limited to fifty lines). All advertisements must be consonant with the purposes and character of The Saturday Review. Rates: 7 cents per word, including signature. Count two additional words for Box and Number. Payment in full must be received ten days in advance of publication. Address Personal Dept., Saturday Review, 25 West 45th Street, New York City.

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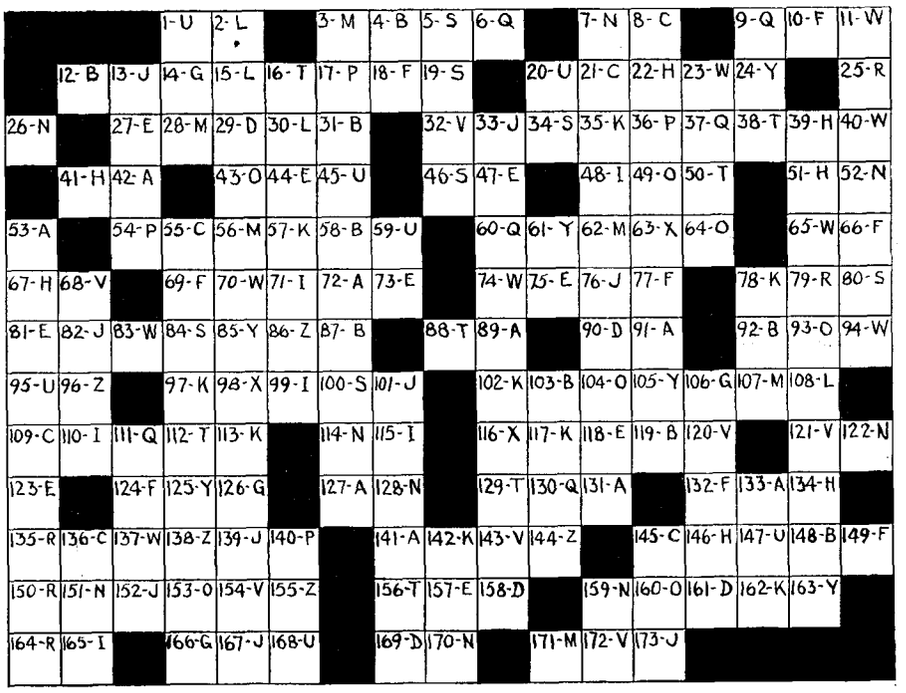
Double-Crostics: No. 171

By ELIZABETH S. KINGSLEY



DIRECTIONS

To solve this puzzle, you must guess twenty-six words, the definitions of which are given in the column headed DEFINITIONS. The letters in each word to be guessed are numbered. These numbers appear under the dashes in the column headed WORDS. There is a dash for each letter in the required word. The key letters in the squares are for convenience, indicating to which word in the definitions each letter in the diagram belongs. When you have guessed a word, fill it in on the dashes; then write each letter in the correspondingly numbered square on the puzzle diagram. When the squares are all filled in you will find (by reading from left to right) a quotation from a famous author. Reading up and down the letters mean nothing. The black squares indicate ends of words; therefore words do not necessarily end at the right side of the diagram.

When the column headed WORDS is filled in, the initial letters spell the name of the author and the title of the piece from which the quotation has been taken. Authority for spelling and definitions is Webster's International Dictionary.

The solution of last week's *Double-Crostic* will be found on page 17 of this issue.

DEFINITIONS

A. That which contains or realizes a final cause (phil.).
B. Diseased.
C. Regenerates.
D. Portrait in wax (Roman antiq.).
E. Science of lighthouses.
F. To sacrifice.
G. Force, power.
H. Prone to agitation of the feelings.
I. Popular novel by Henry Seton-Merriman (1896).
J. Made changes.
K. Specialist in science of matter and motion.
L. Elevated.
M. Deepest within.
N. Immovable articulation (teeth in jaws).
O. Author of "Conduct of Life."
P. Captures.
Q. Internal or inherent power.
R. Mass of cast metal.
S. Forgetfulness.
T. Causing terror.
U. Threatens to collapse.
V. Cultivates ostentatiously.
W. To remove from the scabbard.
X. Applied to Mass said without music or choir.
Y. Safety zones for pedestrians (Eng.).
Z. Push.

WORDS

53 89 127 42 141 131 72 133 91
12 87 119 58 103 4 31 148 92
136 8 145 55 21 109
169 90 161 29 158
81 157 75 123 47 27 44 118 73
149 124 69 10 18 66 132 77
166 106 126 14
134 41 146 51 39 67 22
115 165 110 99 71 48
167 152 13 33 76 82 101 139 173
102 57 162 97 117 78 142 35 113
2 15 108 30
28 107 171 62 3 56
151 128 7 159 52 122 26 114 170
153 64 49 160 104 93 43
54 17 36 140
111 9 130 37 60 6
25 150 135 79 164
5 80 34 100 84 46 19
38 156 50 129 88 16 112
95 1 45 147 168 59 20
172 143 121 68 32 120 154
94 40 83 65 23 137 11 74 70
116 63 98
85 163 61 125 24 105
155 96 86 138 144

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Trade Winds

BY P. E. G. QUERCUS

NOTHING more interests Old Quercus than the biographies of publishers. How did they first get into that queer trade? Did they really read books, or choose them on hunches? Did they, as John Donne says, "swallow but never chaw"? Did they read books published by other houses too? What, if any, were their amiable vices? Were they pleasant companions in the office? How did they spend their vacations? Did they feel the spirochete bacilli of *bibliodisia*, which a pedantic colleague of ours has described as "the peculiar arrancy which gives a publisher longevity; the ecstasy beyond reason or calculus of profit." ☞So with pleasure Old Omnivorous Q., in the anteroom of the Lippincott Company's New York office, fell upon a little privately printed (Philadelphia, 1888) memoir of old Joshua Ballinger Lippincott (1813-1886) who first brought that name

JOSHUA B. LIPPINCOTT

into publishing about a hundred years ago. (Businesses he took over dated back to 1792). ☞In our earliest bookstore connections we were raised on a lot of standard Lippincott titles: the good old Gazetteer; Allibone's Dictionary of Authors; the Worcester Dictionaries and the Brewer Handbooks, and that perennial classic of the drug trade the U. S. Dispensatory. ☞Old Josh Lippincott's origin was as solid, sagacious, and sober as those admirable books. He was born of "the people called Quakers" in Burlington County, New Jersey—the region of resolute nonconformists, and birthplace of such different creatures as John Woolman and James Fenimore Cooper. He worked for a Philadelphia bookseller as a boy; to such good purpose that when he was only 18, and his employer failed, young Joshua took over the management by unanimous request of the creditors. At 23 he borrowed $2000 from his mother—the only money he ever borrowed—and started his own publishing business at 4th and Race Streets, Philadelphia. His earliest specialty (still probably the most profitable element in any publishing traffic) was Bibles and prayer-books. It is sad, and true to the everlasting human ironies, that the piety that started him uphill also shortened his life. On a vacation pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 1875 he took a fever from which he never entirely recovered. ☞The little memoir, written in the mood of affectionate obsequy, does not tell us as much of old Joshua in person as we should like to know. (Hardly anything ever does, of anyone.) That he showed extraordinary keenness and editorial gumption is plain: he marched in and colonized the Canaan of the Philadelphia book-trade in the ancient Joshua spirit. Ben Franklin, Josh Lippincott, Cy Curtis, have been the three great monarchs of popular print in that enigmatic town. It is interesting to see his grandsons, now the active sponsors of the famous imprint, showing the inherited intoxicandum of that same glorious bacillus, *bibliodisia*. No longer need it be said of Philly as of the ruler's daughter in Matthew IX, 24.

☞"The do-as-the-men-do mania," says the ladies' shopping column of the *New Yorker*, "has given rise to some constructive items, notably a blue hop-sack ensemble, consisting of a skull-cap, a shirt, slacks that button on one hip, and cork-soled clogs in two colors." What men are those?

☞The famous messenger service of Doubleday Doran and Co., traveling couriers between Garden City and the New York office, has gone on many years without mishap. On June 25, the messenger was held up by footpads in a Chrysler sedan as he got off the elevator stop at Sixth Avenue and 50th. They had "a message" for him from the head of Doubleday's accounting department. Before he knew it, he was taken for a ride and his pouch rifled. It contained the week's pay-checks for the New York staff and also some MSS. The pay-checks could be stopped and replaced, but we are anxious to know if any manuscripts vanished? ☞The very remarkable exhibit of famous English MSS arranged by the Rosenbach Company (15 East 51) in honor of the A.L.A. convention continues until July 2. The treasures on show range in time from one of the finest of all MS copies of Chaucer (in its original binding; written out by some 15th century scribe) down to the MS of Conrad's *Nostromo*. ☞Probably the most melodramatic exhibit is the original MS sonnets by D. G. Rossetti which were buried in his wife's coffin: *A sonnet is a moment's monument*, etc. We were specially pleased to see the MS of Gilbert White's *Selbourne*. ☞Stephen Crane Association, Newark, N. J., has received a letter from the Delta Upsilon at the University of Kansas. It said: "Dear Brother Crane, We are attempting to enlarge our collection of pictures of prominent DU's. I feel certain that a picture of one so prominent in public affairs as you will do much to impress visitors and rushees of our chapter at Lawrence." ☞Stephen Crane died June 5, 1900. We suggest that D.U. subscribe to the S. R. L.

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